

America

APRIL 2022

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

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**#Own
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#OwnYourFaith

When John Wynne, S.J., opened the first office of **America** in 1909, he had a simple yet daring vision: to create a media ministry that would give Catholics a voice in the public debate of the United States. That's why he called it **America**. Over the course of a Great Depression, two world wars, eight papacies, 20 presidencies and countless more events in the church and the world, **America** became one of the most celebrated Catholic journals in the English-speaking world.

Yet relatively few people heard about it.

Like much of the Catholic media, for more than a century **America** did not conduct marketing beyond the occasional direct mail effort. We certainly did not make any big, national effort to get the word out. We relied on word of mouth and friendly relations—for example, with the network of Jesuit schools, which often made **America** required reading for most of their students. For a number of reasons—starting with the realities of publishing in a digital age—those strategies are no longer practical or effective. It's past time to make a more organized and concerted effort to let people know about this amazing resource.

In many ways the news and analysis **America** provides are needed now more than ever. That might seem strange to say, given the precarious position of organized religion in the contemporary United States. The decline of religious affiliation is the result of myriad factors, but it certainly includes the tendency of organized religions to take their appeal for granted and not properly “market” themselves or, in Christian theological terms, evangelize.

Among baptized Catholics, many people feel the church has failed to engage them, failed to listen to their questions and failed to live up to the ideals it professes. They have decided to walk away. But even among those who remain in the pews, there are questions and challenges.

And yet how many Catholics, practicing or otherwise, are even aware of the existence of the Catholic media, of publications like **America** whose mission is to accompany them through that questioning, to help them make sense of events in the church and the world? A smart, Catholic take—one that looks with a critical and well-trained eye at the events of the day, from elections to Netflix specials to Vatican news—is a perspective that many Catholics simply do not know exists.

We are going to change that.

This month, for the first time in its history, **America** is launching a groundbreaking national marketing campaign. We're calling it #OwnYourFaith.

When you come across this campaign—on social media, on city sidewalks, in places like *The Wall Street Journal*—you'll find us proposing questions for dialogue: the same questions most Catholics are asking, the issues at the heart of the national and ecclesial conversation. I believe that the church—and the country—are better off when we are free to wrestle with the most pressing issues of the day, unbound by ideological traps or that nagging sense that we are not supposed to ask difficult or controversial questions in church. I know that you, as a committed **America** reader, believe in a vigorous conversation too. With this marketing campaign,

we're betting that there are millions of Catholics who also believe in that but have not yet heard about **America**.

Why #OwnYourFaith? Because the Catholic Church belongs to all of us, even though it may not always feel that way. This great gift is not just your parish priest's church, not only Father Matt Malone's church, not just the U.S. bishops' church, but Christ's church and therefore yours. It is through him, with him and in him that we share a common baptism.

Many of you reading this have supported the mission of **America** for years, even decades. The loyalty of our subscribers and benefactors is our most precious gift. And we owe it to you to put in the time and resources required to make this work available to many more people and to hand it on to a new generation. The issues facing our nation and our church—the very questions we wrestle with at **America**—are too important not to.

And so I ask you to join us in this unprecedented effort. Is there someone in your family, your workplace or your parish who would appreciate a smart, Catholic take on politics, faith and culture? It's time to tell them about **America**. Tell them in person, or with a quick text or email, about why you read and subscribe to **America**. Pass along an article, an issue, a podcast, a video about something that made you think or gave you hope.

While we've tapped the smartest and most dedicated staff in publishing to craft this marketing campaign, we know that our greatest resource in spreading the word is you. Thank you.

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



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AP Photo/Bernat Armangue

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Can ‘traditional’ Catholics support Pope Francis?

“I am the kind of Catholic who is supposed to be a Pope Francis foe,” wrote Terence Sweeney in the March 2022 issue of America—but despite this expectation, he in fact approves of the current pope. Noting that Francis defies easy categorization in the political and even theological realms, Mr. Sweeney argued that so-called traditionalist Catholics often fail to see just how “traditional” the pope’s teachings are. Many readers responded in agreement with Mr. Sweeney’s view, although others were skeptical that it is widely shared by proponents of “traditional” Catholicism.

I am what I would consider to be a “middle of the road” Catholic, something I consider Pope Francis to be also. Perhaps that is why I am comfortable with having him as a pope and the manner in which he does what he does. Now, I’m not so sure about other parts of the world, but it seems that here in the United States, one has to be an “either or” person; there is no middle ground on much of anything anymore. I believe that is why so many exhibit frustration with Pope Francis: “If he is not with me (and my views) he must be against me.” This comes from both ends of our social spectrum. Societally, it appears that much of the United States has become an embittered group of people ready to destroy whatever they disagree with. Perhaps we need to listen more to Pope Francis, not just as Catholics, but as citizens of the United States.

Stephen Healy

↪ Great point! One of the root causes of this division is the politicization of everything. Party politics by its very nature is divisive. If that is the only level at which we function, there will always be an “either or” situation. But our Catholic faith, as has been pointed out many times, is a “both and” faith. Unless we reach that level of reality, we will continue in this seemingly perennial battle between opposing sides.

Elena Garcia

I made the felt banners in the 1960s and 70s. I was glad to know then, and now, that the efforts of young people to contribute to the liturgy—sometimes primitive, sometimes clumsy, but always crafted with love—are as worthy a contribution to the celebration of the Mass as the gleaming gold and stained glass religious artifacts.

Anne Kiefer

While this article is comforting, many of the so-called traditional Catholics would utterly reject its conclusions.

They are “radical traditionalists” who want to turn back the clock, not just on the Roman Catholic Church, but on modernity itself.

Rosemari Zagarri

No one is asking the church to “get with the times” in the sense of conforming to them. Rather, we must behave in the same sense that Christ “got with the times” during his life. Christ broke numerous cultural and religious standards vis-à-vis encounters with nonbelievers, with women, with tax collectors, with lepers. He broke established Jewish Sabbath regulations. Traditionalists would have us return to a mind-set and approach that contradicts what Christ did.

Vincent Gaglione

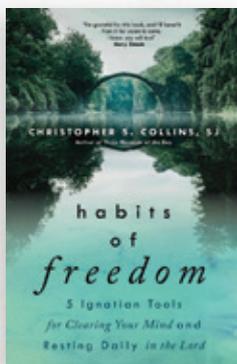
The people of Nazareth wanted to kill Jesus for preaching the truth. In today’s church, so many American bishops, priests and lay people are trying to do the same, especially to Pope Francis, for exactly the same reason. The Gospel always proves relevant to our day and time.

Peter Devine

↪ Our brothers and sisters in Christ that you reference are not like a bunch of sanguinary Nazarenes bent on killing our Lord, and to impute such things to them is just an exercise in unhelpful hyperbole. Perhaps we can talk about how traditionalist Catholics might have been well intended—but the current reality, judging from the dozens of comments here, is that we appear to be a divided flock.

J. Griffin

NEW CATHOLIC READS

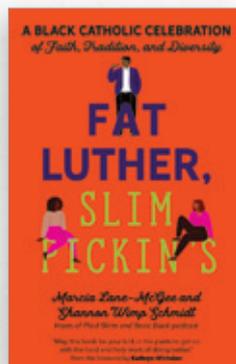


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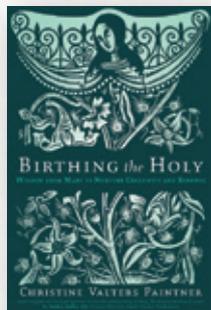


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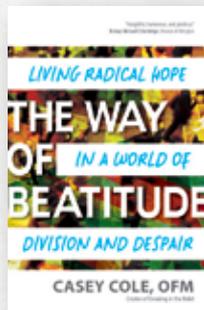
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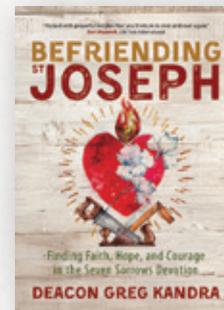
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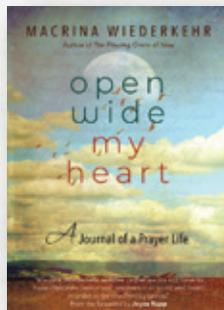
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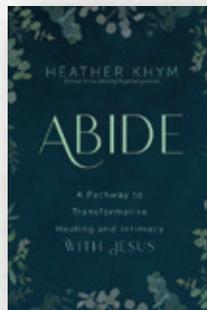
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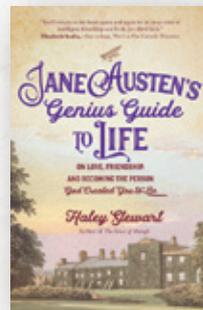
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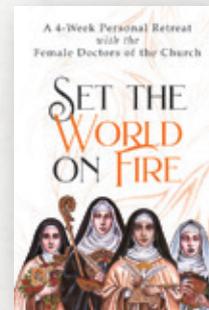
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Looking for Easter in the Wake of Good Friday

In the Scripture readings for the week following Easter (Lk 24:13–32), we encounter two of Jesus’ disciples on the road to Emmaus in the wake of the crucifixion. They are downcast and confused. “We had hoped,” they tell the stranger who joins them. They had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah, that he was the fulfillment of the Scriptures, that there was now a bright future calling them out of the darkness. Instead, they feel greater confusion, greater loss.

Perhaps today many of us find ourselves in a similarly disconsoling place. Just when it seemed the Covid-19 pandemic was finally receding, Russia has invaded Ukraine, destroying countless innocent lives and raising the threat of world war. The attack on Ukraine and the threat of a nuclear conflict dwarf all other problems our society faces; for on a scale not seen since the cataclysmic years of the Second World War, the world faces a war in the heart of Europe, begun by an unjust aggressor intent on conquest.

Here at home, the nation also faces a host of other challenges. President Biden called attention to a number of them in his State of the Union address last month: economic insecurity, supply chain issues, immigration, climate change and more. If their immediate impact is not as obvious, their long-term effects are also a specter haunting our future.

Climate change affects all of humanity, but it hurts the poor and vulnerable the most. As Pope Francis noted in “*Laudato Si’*,” those on the periphery of society often live in areas most vulnerable to climate change, especially when their livelihoods depend on agriculture, fishing or forestry. The poor are powerless against drought,

water contamination and hurricanes.

Meanwhile, inflation poses immediate challenges to those struggling to meet their basic needs. Those who live hand to mouth, paycheck to paycheck, feel sharply rising costs more acutely. To save money, families might eat less, causing malnutrition in children. Or parents might not get the medical care they need, putting entire families at risk. And low-income families are even more vulnerable to predatory lenders during a time of economic uncertainty. Nevertheless, a balancing act is necessary in governmental efforts to check inflation; as the U.S. bishops said in their 1986 pastoral “*Economic Justice for All*,” efforts to address inflation should not put people at risk of unemployment.

The ongoing global migration crisis continues to be of major concern; immigrants and asylum seekers, fleeing poverty and violence in their home countries, continue to arrive at the borders of wealthier nations. In the United States, partisan political impasses have blocked efforts to fix the long-broken immigration system. Even within Catholic circles, some have gone so far as to claim that providers of humanitarian services on the border are facilitating illegal immigration. Meanwhile, thousands of vulnerable migrants await a fair hearing in squalor, threatened by organized crime on our southern border.

After witnessing such suffering, after absorbing the depth of these problems, where can Christians turn to find Easter hope?

Ours is not a cheap faith that asserts that things will be better only in heaven, that would allow us to accept the suffering of others passively. For Christians, the paschal mystery

is one reality. Without Good Friday, then Holy Thursday is only a meal; and without Holy Thursday, Good Friday is only a murder. And without either, there is no Easter. But what responsibility comes along with the joy and hope of Easter? We are called as a community and called to seek unity.

Christians must also reject false ideologies or other human schemas that divide God’s people with counterfeit dichotomies. In the United States, a nation that has historically prized rugged individualism, Christians must work to develop and preserve authentic communities, ones that recognize individuality and diversity while striving toward a common good, a common destiny.

Beyond our shores, we must act together with others if we are to relieve the world’s suffering. In addition to rejecting an illusory religion, we must also resist the thin and incomplete unity that comes from nationalism and the narrow unity found through war. A unity forged in contempt or hatred for others is no unity at all. “Once this health crisis passes,” Pope Francis wrote of the pandemic in “*Fratelli Tutti*,” “our worst response would be to plunge even more deeply into feverish consumerism and new forms of egotistic self-preservation. God willing, after all this, we will think no longer in terms of ‘them’ and ‘those,’ but only ‘us.’”

This Christian attitude is a grace Jesus bestows on us in community. According to the Gospels, the risen Christ usually appeared to more than one person at a time (the exception being Mary Magdalene). As Pope Francis said in his 2021 message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, we are offered a path to reconciliation “not as individuals, but as a people.”

“The truth, however, is that we are all in the same boat and called to work together so that there will be no more walls that separate us, no longer others, but only a single ‘we,’ encompassing all of humanity,” Francis wrote. “The Holy Spirit enables us to embrace everyone, to build communion in diversity, to unify differences without imposing a depersonalized uniformity.”

Faith in the risen Christ must lead Christians into deeper solidarity with those who suffer. Scripture makes it clear that Jesus identified himself with the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed, a theme present throughout the Old Testament as well. Jesus also calls Christians to pray for those who persecute them.

The promise of eternal life must lead to greater forgiveness and reconciliation, not passivity in the face of injustice. Such reconciliation can come about only when judgment is left in the hands of God. Let there be no illusion: Forgiving those who sin against us is not easy. Answering the call of the risen Christ does not erase the wounds of the crucifixion. But forgiveness is the only path to unity and, ultimately, to a community that acts for justice.

After the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized the risen Christ, they realized that their very reality had changed in their communion with Jesus: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

May we place our hope again in the risen Christ this Easter and recognize him where he may be found. May we never proclaim an empty optimism that turns away from the suffering of others. Instead, we pray that our communities will become signs of peace, love and forgiveness, and instruments of God’s justice here on earth. May we be one as God is one.

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Paul Farmer: saint with a stethoscope

The obituaries for Dr. Paul Farmer, who died in February, rightly recognized his lifesaving work with the global nonprofit medical group he founded, Partners in Health, and his tireless advocacy for the poor and the marginalized, especially in Haiti and Rwanda. Those achievements are an important part of Paul's story, but any catalog of them cannot capture the true nature of this humanitarian and peacemaker.

I knew Paul for 44 years, beginning with the three years we lived together in a fraternity at Duke University. From the day I met him, I knew he was a genius. He did astonishing things, from getting straight A's in pre-med while writing the culture column for the Duke student newspaper to creating huge exhibits for the school library. Once I came across him in the bathroom writing on toilet paper and asked what he was doing, "Writing my mother," he answered. "I promised I would write to her every day. She doesn't mind how I do that."

Years later, when we spoke together at the Harvard Catholic Center in Cambridge, he remembered that we used to stay up all night talking about what we were going to do with our lives. I don't remember that as much as almost nightly parties in his room, to which he seemed to invite every student at Duke. But he underwent a dramatic conversion on the night Archbishop Óscar Romero was killed in El Salvador. He attended the prayer vigil that night on the campus, and as he later told me, he suddenly realized that to be a Christian meant you had to serve Christ on the side of the poor.

I went into the Jesuits, while he moved to Haiti to volunteer at a hos-

pital. We stayed in touch, and he encouraged me to speak out against war, racism, poverty and nuclear weapons. "Keep at it, don't give up"—those were his constant admonitions to me.

On his 50th birthday, his friends threw a party (with a performance by the band Arcade Fire) to raise funds for Partners in Health. He agreed on the condition that I first celebrate a Mass and preach on Matthew 25. That night, I got to meet his Partners in Health co-founders, Ophelia Dahl and Jim Yong Kim, who later became the head of the World Bank. I wanted to know how they pulled off creating such an important health care project.

Dr. Kim cried in telling me the answer: "Paul said, 'Let's start a nonprofit organization that has only one rule: Everybody has to be kind. We have to agree to practice unconditional kindness.'"

I instantly recognized that as the real Paul Farmer. He was always the smartest person in the room—and the kindest. And I thought that we should make that a new ground rule for the church, and for every peace and justice group: To be a member, you have to practice unconditional kindness.

Others can recite his accomplishments and awards, the hospitals and universities he built, the millions of lives he saved. But I was amazed at the way he lived. At one point, he would teach at Harvard for a week, then fly to Haiti for a week, then fly to Rwanda, where his wife Didi and their children were living, and so on. I was challenged by his witness to rethink how hard I was (or wasn't) working for justice for the poor. He gave all of himself. And when I heard of his sudden death, part of me was not that surprised.

In a documentary about Partners in Health, "Bending the Arc," there is

a scene where Paul is working with a dying patient who says her father is busy building her coffin. Paul puts her on treatment and then casually says to her: "Tell your father to get rid of the coffin. You're not going to need it."

There are so many ways to approach Paul's mythic life and teachings, but I have always thought of him in terms of resurrection. Even when I first knew him in the 1970s, Paul was a Christ figure to me. He was the life of the party, but also the one who helped us find the meaning of life, the one who told the poorest of the poor to get rid of their coffins. He took on death and brought millions of people back to life.

That is why my friend should not only be canonized as a saint but named a doctor of the church. He was the doctor who reclaimed the Gospel for the poor in an unprecedented way.

I'm grieving as I write this, and I get overcome thinking about my friend, the good doctor. He challenged me and encouraged me every step of my journey, and always brought peace, hope and the fullness of life to me and everyone else. I take heart knowing that this person who practiced resurrection lives on with the risen Jesus.

With Paul Farmer, as with Jesus, death does not get the last word. Thank you, Paul, for your resurrection life!

The Rev. John Dear is a priest of the Diocese of Monterey and the author of 35 books on peace and justice. He offers Zoom workshops at www.beatitudescenter.org.

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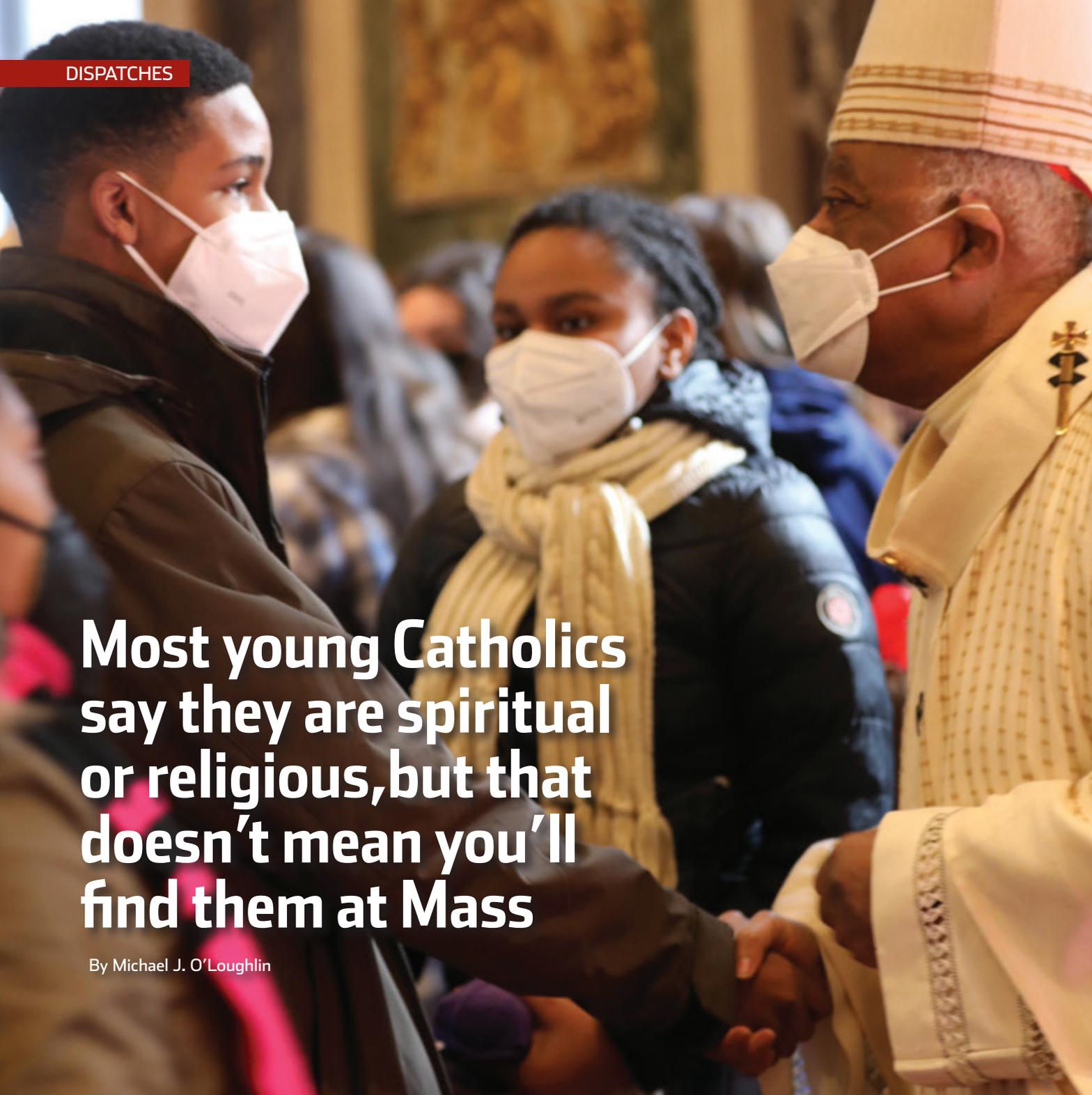
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MARIE DENNIS





Most young Catholics say they are spiritual or religious, but that doesn't mean you'll find them at Mass

By Michael J. O'Loughlin

The vast majority of young self-identified Catholics describe themselves as at least slightly spiritual and religious. But because they disagree with the church on several issues and are open to other forms of spirituality, they practice their faith in ways that might not be familiar to older believers. They may also often lack strong ties to churches and other faith communities.

Those are the findings from a new report released in

February by the Springtide Research Institute, an independent research organization affiliated with the Christian Brothers that tracks the attitudes of young people about their “human and religious experiences.”

The report, “The State of Religion & Young People 2021: Navigating Uncertainty,” concludes that young Catholics practice their faith in a way that does not necessarily translate into church attendance, an attitude the authors

dubbed “faith unbundled.”

“Faith Unbundled is a term that describes the way young people increasingly construct their faith by combining elements such as beliefs, identity, practices, and community from a variety of religious and nonreligious sources, rather than receiving all these things from a single, intact system or tradition,” the report says.

More than half of young Catholics (55 percent) said they attend a religious service at least once per month, though fewer turn to their faith during difficult times. And 52 percent of young Catholics agreed with this statement: “I do not like to be told answers about faith and religion; I’d rather discover my own answers.”

The report is based on survey and interview findings of 10,274 people between the ages of 13 and 25; 1,630 of these self-identified as Catholic.

As for practices commonly associated with religious expression, 30 percent of young Catholics said they pray daily, while 14 percent said they consult a sacred text during difficult times. Just over a quarter of young Catholics said they use their faith as a guide when they are confused about things, and 23 percent said they have no doubt about God’s existence.

At the same time, researchers found that a majority of young Catholics engage in physical activity, meditation, art or music, being in nature, writing, or acts of service at least once a month “as a form of religious or spiritual practice.”

Josh Packard, the executive director of Springtide, said the findings offer a sobering analysis of the disconnect between institutional religion and the spiritual outlook of young people, including Catholics. Faith leaders trying to engage young people should refrain from exploring how to get them back into churches and other places of worship, he said, because so many have no prior exposure to those communities to begin with.

According to the report, for example, 44 percent of Catholics aged 13 to 25 said they do not belong to a religious community, and more than 40 percent said that they do not need one.

Instead, Mr. Packard said, the right question is, “How can we engage them where they are?”

Though researchers are not entirely sure where those spaces are, Mr. Packard said that for Catholic leaders in

particular, leaning into an “accompaniment model” might be the best bet to attract young Catholics. Since his pontificate began in 2013, Pope Francis has urged Catholics to focus on accompaniment and is currently leading a global inquiry into how the church might better live this model of faith.

“Young people are looking for trusted adult guides who are going to be in it for the long haul with them,” Mr. Packard said. “They really want to think and know that there are adults inside of the institution that have their best interests in mind.”

But he cautions that the research should not be read as an indictment of individuals who work in parishes and other church institutions or to suggest they do not care enough about creating spaces that are welcoming for young people. Instead, he said: “Caring isn’t in short supply. There’s a structural mismatch between the institution and what young people need.”

Young Catholics who are more involved with religious institutions do seem to report being happier.

In a section exploring the attitudes of young Latino Catholics, for example, researchers found that “social isolation decreases as participation in religious gatherings increases.” And like their peers of any faith, the report found, “young Catholics who report being ‘very religious’ say they are ‘flourishing a lot’ at higher rates than young Catholics who report being ‘not religious at all.’”

The fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic has further distanced some young Catholics from the church, and parish efforts to connect with believers during the early days of restrictions appear not to have made much of a mark.

Just 6 percent of young Catholics said a faith leader reached out to them personally during the first year of the pandemic, compared with 18 percent of Protestants; and though half of young Catholics said they streamed a Mass, religious service or spiritual event online, they did not find them particularly fulfilling. Just 2 percent said the online services brought them joy, while 6 percent said they found hope through them.

The pandemic also affected church attendance. About a quarter of young Catholics said that they stopped going to religious or spiritual services; almost as many, 20 percent, stated that they were happy to lose a connection to religion during the pandemic.

Beyond their experiences with faith during the pandemic, most young Catholics, 59 percent, felt the government did not do an adequate job protecting people during

the pandemic, and 58 percent agreed with the statement, “When the pandemic is over, I expect a lot will be different, in mostly disappointing ways.”

Few young Catholics (16 percent) said that they completely trust organized religion, and 42 percent said they do not turn to faith communities for guidance because of that lack of trust in the people or beliefs associated with religion.

Researchers also asked young Catholics if they care about a number of social issues and whether they think religious or faith communities share their concerns.

The issue that most closely coincides with what young Catholics care about and how they view faith communities expressing concern is gun control, with 67 percent of young Catholics saying they care about gun control and 58 percent saying they believe faith communities care about the issue, a difference of nine points. The remainder of the issues have differentials of more than 10 percentage points, including racial justice (14 percent), (immigration rights), (13 percent) and environmental causes (12 percent).

But one issue stood out.

“More than any other issue, young people in general perceive a dramatic disconnect in values over the rights of LGBTQA+ people,” the report states. “Similarly, LGBTQA+ rights and issues of income inequality admit the highest disparity between what young Catholics value and what they believe their church values.”

Two-thirds of young Catholics say they care about L.G.B.T. issues, while just 51 percent say that faith communities care about those issues.

About half of young Catholics say they do not feel that they are able to be their “full self” in a faith community. “If their whole selves are not welcome,” the report says, “young people won’t show up.”

Michael J. O’Loughlin, *national correspondent*.
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Religious, spiritual but not turning to church

87% of young Catholics —13 to 25—said they are religious and **85%** said they are spiritual, but only **26%** said: **“I use faith as a guide when I am confused about things.”**

42% of young Catholics reported that they do not trust religious leaders; the same percentage said they do not **“feel safe within religious or faith institutions.”**

43% said they did not “feel close enough to anyone that has a religion or faith to ask about it or share my thoughts”; **35%** said they did not do

anything associated with religion as a child.

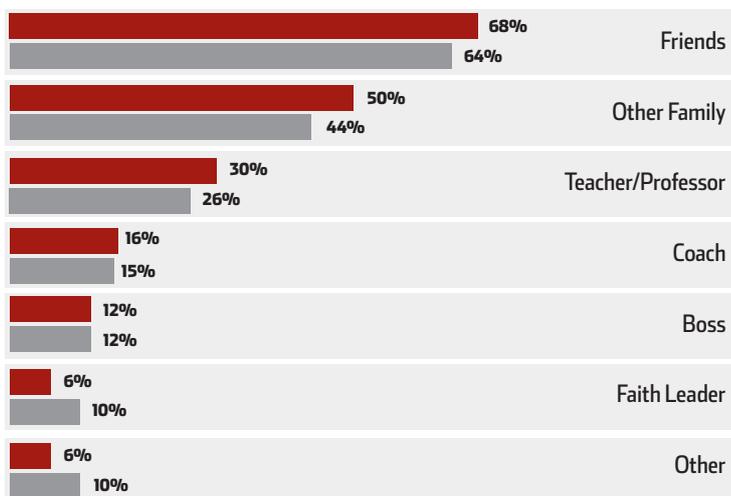
52% of young Catholics said: “I do not like to be told answers about faith and religion; I’d rather discover my own answers,” slightly less than the **58%** reported for all young people.

Of the young Catholics who self-identified as **“very religious,”** only **31%** reported they found connecting with their faith community helpful. **Only 20% of young Catholics who identified as “moderately religious” found this helpful.**

If anyone outside of your home reached out to you personally during the pandemic, who was it?

Respondents could select more than one option.

● Catholic young people ● All young people



Percentages are approximate because of rounding.

Pandemic’s toll

38% of young Catholics said no one outside their home reached out to them to see if they were all right; **50%** felt isolated; almost as many (**49%**) were without someone to talk to; **62%** said that even while living with others, they still felt alone.

58% of young Catholics: “When the pandemic is over, I expect a lot will be different, in mostly disappointing ways.”

Half of young Catholics said they watched at least one religious or spiritual service online, but very few young Catholics said they found joy (**2%**) or hope (**6%**) in these services. Just **4%** said they hope virtual services continue after the pandemic.

50% of young Catholics said they do not know how to get connected to a faith community even if they would like to.

Source: “The State of Religion & Young People 2021, Catholic Edition: Navigating Uncertainty,” Springtide Research Institute.

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The Emerald Island?

Ireland finds it's not easy being green

Movies set in Ireland rarely omit the trope of the aerial shot of rolling green fields. After all, it is the Emerald Isle.

Or is it?

There are, of course, many initiatives that support the assumption that Ireland is green not just chromatically, but politically. A generation ago, with massive public support, the Irish government banned nuclear power development; in 2002, Ireland was ahead of the curve in introducing a levy on plastic bags; and three years ago, it was the second country to declare a climate emergency.

But despite these greenish indicators, Ireland's overall ecological credentials are not all that strong. In 2020 it was one of the worst-performing developed countries in the world at responding to the global climate and biodiversity emergency, landing 39th out of 57, according to the 2020 Climate Change Performance Index. This year, it dropped a further seven spots in that ranking.

The Irish State marked the centenary of its founding last December. It would take a keen eye to discern an environmental consciousness in the debates of those first parliaments. Yet the environment is a central concern of the nation's politics today. This is, in part, down to the vocal protests by Ireland's young people.

The Fridays for Future Ireland campaign has gathered outside Dáil Éireann, Ireland's parliament, and other regional government locations each Friday for over 150 consecutive weeks. The impact of the campaign has been significant.

Brian Leddin is a member of Parliament—known as a T.D. here, for Teachta Dála—representing Limerick City. He is also the Green Party spokesperson on transport, climate action and the environment. He thinks that once Ireland's young people got organized, “the whole discussion changed.”

Although they are too young to vote, the teenagers made the issue relevant for their parents and older relatives.

Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si' officer at Trocaire, the Irish bishops' international development agency. She said that youth activism has been central in compelling official Ireland to begin to confront its poor environmental record, adding that “political parties are seeing this generation of voters coming quite quickly down the road.”

Their enthusiasm for care of creation is such that “climate change is now one of the top five issues for the elec-



Wind power on the rise over Roscommon

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torate, and that certainly wasn't the case three years ago.”

This growing enthusiasm is present in the church as well. Pope Francis called Christians to an ecological conversion in 2015, and many Irish parishes are responding to the call.

Bishop Larry Duffy of Clogher calls it a priority at the national level of the church but says that parishes are engaging with it differently, depending on their local context. What is true of all is that “we're waking up to the fact that we are on a course that's done a great deal of damage.”

Irish environmentalism had its beginnings in grass-roots initiatives concerned with local conservation questions, which arguably remains the beating heart of the movement. The largest environmental networks in the country comprise the Tidy Towns initiative, which is often informally aligned with the local parish and the ecumenical Eco-Congregation Ireland network, explicitly rooted in the churches. If Ireland is to live up to its reputation as the Emerald Isle, the local church remains one of the most fertile sites for extending the energy shown by Fridays for future activists across the broader society.

While Ireland's measured progress on climate change and biodiversity loss remains poor, there are clear ambitions to change direction. The coalition government, which now includes Mr. Leddin's Green Party, has published a Climate Action Plan that commits Ireland to a 51 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Contentious questions remain, including about the role of beef farming in Irish agriculture and the cost of retrofitting homes to be more climate resilient. But there is a sense that every political party is now taking the crisis more seriously.

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Paul Elie,
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Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., Ph.D.,
Georgetown University



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A California bishop invited community organizers to help with the synod



Bishop Daniel E. Garcia has been leading the Diocese of Monterey, Calif., since 2019. He went for his first *ad limina* visit to Rome with the other West Coast bishops just a few weeks before pandemic lockdowns began in California and was moved by the counsel Pope Francis shared.

“He really encouraged us to be spiritual fathers that would walk with our people. He uses the language, always, ‘accompaniment, accompaniment,’” Bishop Garcia said. “I see that the synodal process is doing exactly that. We’re walking with our people, we’re listening to our people, and it will make us a stronger church.”

Pope Francis initiated a roughly two-year synodal process on communion, participation and mission last October. Parishes throughout the world have been called to participate in that process.

The Diocese of Monterey is in the beginning stages of the synod, but “we don’t need to reinvent the wheel,” said Bishop Garcia. “There are already some processes out there.” He had been meeting with Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action, or COPA, since he arrived in Monterey and enlisted the community organizers to assist the diocesan preparation for the synod.

Timothy McManus is a lead organizer in California with the Industrial Areas Foundation, a national network of faith- and community-based organizations. He said there are some key elements to community organizing that can help the church carry out the synod. It is important,

foremost, he said, for parishes to form the right kind of synodal team.

“The team should reflect the diversity of the parish and get into different pockets of the parish,” he said. “Team members should have certain leadership qualities; it should be someone who can listen, is curious about others, has imagination and is not closed off to possibilities.”

He said that it is essential to focus on people’s actual experiences and not to spend time focusing on theories and ideologies. One question he asks participants is, “What recent stories can you share, positive and negative?” he said.

“Because that’s real,” Mr. McManus said. “Your experience is real. And it gets much closer to the truth of something than when we have our theories or opinions or worldviews of things.”

Another key facet of successful meetings is turnout. Mr. McManus referred to what the 20th-century civil rights activist Ella Baker termed “spadework.”

“It takes a lot of phone calls and being outside after Mass, repeating an announcement several times at Mass and follow-up calls...so you can get as many people as possible into the circle,” Mr. McManus said.

Poor turnouts, he said, could mean creating a parish team of the same people who show up for every church event. That is not the point of the synod, which hopes to reach out to the margins of the Catholic community to hear from as many people as possible.



The Rev. German Rodriguez speaks with parishioners of St. John the Baptist in King City, Calif., during the Diocese of Monterey's first synod training session on Jan. 31. More than 150 people participated.

Courtesy, Deacon David Ford/Diocese of Monterey



CNS photo/Lisa Schulte, Catholic Voice

Arizona priest who performed invalid baptisms remembered fondly in Brazil

The Rev. Andres Arango, the Colombian-born former pastor of a parish in Phoenix, Ariz., who resigned on Feb. 1 after the discovery that he had performed invalid baptisms there for two decades, previously worked in Brazil at the end of the 1990s.

But the news of the invalid baptisms in the United States has not created the same anxiety in Brazil as it did in his current parish. Members of one of his former communities said they doubt that he used incorrect formulas for sacraments while he worked there, and many of them recall him fondly as one of the most important priests in their lives. Father Arango worked in Salvador, Bahia State, and in the neighboring city of Simões Filho between 1995 and 2000.

“He changed my life,” said Nélio Machado, 37, a former parishioner in Simões Filho. “And not only mine, but also the lives of many others.”

Like other churchgoers who attended São Miguel of Cotegipe Church, Mr. Machado described Father Arango as “nothing less than a wonderful priest,” someone with “a gift to attract people, especially young people.”

The Korean-born Catholic theologian Jung Mo Sung, a religion studies professor at the Methodist University of São Paulo, described concerns with the formula of baptism, which provoked a Vatican clarification in 2020, as the fruit of “the instability and insecurity in a changing world.”

Mr. Sung argued that sacraments are not “one individual’s ritual, but the process through which the Spirit of God operates in a community.” That is why, he said, the strict fulfillment of an “absolutely correct formula” should not be given so much importance, although he admitted that clear limits must be respected.

“Sacraments are not magic. Rites are an expression of the Spirit and not its cause. If the priest said a mistaken word, the Spirit of God is bigger than that,” Mr. Sung said.

Eduardo Campos Lima contributes from São Paulo, Brazil.

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'THE WHOLE CITY IS ON FIRE'

By Greg Boyle

What Rodney King and the racial unrest in Los Angeles taught me about policing, community and opportunity

It was a Wednesday, so I had evening Mass at the Dorothy Kirby Center in Commerce, Calif., a lockdown facility for troubled teens, mainly gang members. Earlier that day, at 3:15 p.m. on April 29, 1992, four police officers had been acquitted of the use of excessive force in the beating of Rodney King during Mr. King's arrest following a high-speed car chase. I was aware of the verdict when I presided in the tiny chapel at Kirby. Afterwards, I would visit the "cottages" where the minors lived. I sat in the living room and was speaking with a few kids, but I grew distracted by the images on the TV. Los Angeles was on fire, and I needed to get home.

I was in my sixth and final year as pastor of Dolores Mission Church, the poorest parish in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, comprising mostly people from the largest grouping of public housing west of the Mississippi. The Los Angeles Police Department called the neighborhood, Boyle Heights (no relation), the location of the highest concentration of gang activity in the whole city. We had eight different gangs, all at war with one another. Violence and reprisals of further violence were common in the neighborhoods around Dolores Mission even without an ignit-

ing event like the acquittal of four white men for the brutal beating of a Black man. If any pocket of poverty in Los Angeles was likely to ignite, it would be my parish.

But when I got home, the parish was not imploding. It never did implode. I would subsequently tell *The Los Angeles Times* that perhaps one of the reasons was because our parish had 60 strategically hired rival gang members working together and who, consequently, had a reason to get up in the morning and perhaps a reason not to torch their own community. This was the beginnings of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang intervention, rehab and re-entry program on the planet. That *Times* article led to a seminal donation to begin Homeboy Bakery. Currently, we have ten social enterprises, free tattoo removal, therapy, a school and an 18-month training program, with 10,000 gang members, men and women, each year, seeking healing and restoration. There are 120,000 gang members and 1,100 gangs in Los Angeles County.

Tom Brokaw called. He had become a friend and had done several segments on his various broadcasts on our parish community's response to gang violence. "What are you seeing?" he asked me. I was on the second floor of our

L.A.P.D. officers on Temple Street in Los Angeles, Calif., April 29, 1992.



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Boyle Heights Jesuit community, looking out the window. I could see Central and South Los Angeles in flames. “The whole city is on fire, Tom.” The smell of smoke lasted for many days. I sat with Mario, an imposing gang member (who would be killed some months later) on a stoop outside a project apartment, two days into the unrest. “It’s the end of the world, isn’t it, G?” I put my arm around him. “No, it isn’t, *mijo*. It isn’t.” I remember feeling not entirely sure that it was not.

The National Guard arrived in our neighborhood nearly four days later. They need not have come at all. In other parts of the city, there was distrust between Korean shopkeepers and poor folks of color who were their customers, and television images of attacks on local stores were commonplace in some neighborhoods of Los Angeles during the unrest. Not so much here. Gang members, watching the images on the TV screen, feared that others would invade their community and attack “our stores.” They stood by, armed against the “attacks” that never happened. I thanked the local store owners for staying open during these days. It promoted something that resembled normal at such a troubling moment.

Once, in midday, I came upon several young men atop a factory adjacent to the housing projects, passing down appliances and boxes to adults below eager to receive the merchandise. I remember screaming like a banshee at them; they all slunk away, with heads bowed.

The unrest lasted for six days, and 64 people lost their lives. At the midpoint of these days, I was summoned to meet with Gov. Pete Wilson and other community leaders at the governor’s office in Los Angeles. I suppose you could say that the governor and I were not exactly on friendly terms. We previously had gotten into an argument on live television. It was a debate of sorts and, in those days, we were stuck in the “Get Tough” times, which emphasized increased arrests and longer prison sentences in an effort to deter crime. Darryl Gates was chief of police, and it was the era of Operation Hammer, gang round-ups, draconian laws and endlessly excessive use of force by police against gang members. I had many encounters with gang members, bloodied and bruised, with their faces rearranged, and I presumed they ran into gang rivals. They would reluctantly confide that they had been taken to the factories behind the projects and beaten by police for purposes of interrogation



Living through those times taught us that moral outrage will never be a substitute for a moral compass.

and intimidation. On TV, I told the governor that getting tough, longer sentences and implementing stricter laws to end gang violence was “like building cemeteries, then saying you’ve cured AIDS.” (I was young.) So it was surprising for me to receive an invitation to this gathering around the governor’s conference table.

I remember the actor and activist Edward James Olmos arriving late to the meeting. He was breathless and in jeans and work clothes, carrying big brooms. He had become quite and deservedly celebrated for rolling up his sleeves and cleaning the streets in the aftermath of the unrest. He galvanized many volunteers to hit the streets, clean up and vow to rebuild.

Change and Stasis

Much has evolved over these 30 years. Certainly, in the first 10 years of Homeboy Industries’ existence—1988 to 1998—our efforts to help gang members transform their lives was met with intense hostility. Death threats, bomb threats and hate mail were regularly directed our way. These never came from gang members, since we represented a clear and assured hope to them. But for those who had demonized gang members, it was but a short hop to demonize an organization that assisted them. In fact, nearly all the hate mail was from anonymous law enforcement officials. “We hate you. You are part of the problem...not the solution.” If the gang member was the enemy, then we were fraternizing with the enemy.

I had buried my first young person killed because of gang violence in 1988, and by the time this is published

I will have buried my 254th person gunned down in our streets for no reason at all. This most recent one is a 14-year-old named Jeremy. Gang-related homicides in Los Angeles reached a peak of 1,000 in 1992 by the end of the year, eight months after the unrest.

Since 1992, homicides have been cut in half and then nearly cut in half again. But like most cities during the pandemic, Los Angeles has seen a 30 percent increase in homicides during the past two years. Yet we are still far from the horrific body count that followed in the wake of the Rodney King riots.

In Los Angeles, anyway, policing changed. We evolved as a city from the days of Darryl Gates’s Operation Hammer, which were mindlessly tough (1978–92), to the community policing of Chief Bill Bratton (2002–09) to an even more enlightened, “relational policing” of Chief Charlie Beck (2009–18). Police during this time actively sought a relationship with people “on their beat” and frequently coordinated with community organizations. The leadership in the police department valued and even gave credit to Homeboy Industries for a marked decrease in gang violence. Still, in the early years of Homeboy Industries, the rank-and-file police officer did not always share the benign view of our efforts at gang rehabilitation that their leadership had. Thirty years ago, homies would change out of their “Homeboy Industries” shirts after work, because wearing them would get them stopped by cops and harassed. Now, our good work is more widely recognized; if you are stopped, wearing the shirt might well be the reason you are released.

When the four Los Angeles police officers were acquitted in 1992, the prevailing cultural take on gang members was to demonize them in a wholesale way. They were the “bad guys” doing “bad things.” Today, we are all more inclined to find, as the homies say, “the thorn underneath,” those factors causing a lethal absence of hope. More and more we have come to realize, since those days when Los Angeles was in flames, that no kid is seeking anything when he joins a gang; he is fleeing something. No hopeful kid has ever joined a gang.

In the ensuing three decades since the unrest, the adverse childhood experiences study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente looked at the way neglect and trauma during childhood negatively affect an individual’s well-being as an adult. The lessons from this research have been wholly incorporated into Homeboy Industry’s trauma-informed way of seeing as a society, and it has urged us to address what undergirds violence, rather than merely “calm the cough” of the lung cancer patient.



L.A.P.D. officers advance along Temple Street in Los Angeles, Calif., during the first day of the Rodney King riots, April 29, 1992.



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Community Efforts

There are 18,000 independent law enforcement agencies in the United States, and we have long asked them to solve every piece and part of crime and violence in the country: mental illness, child protection, domestic violence situations, homelessness and people who do harm to themselves. We have, along the way, felt it necessary to train cops to handle all of the above. I think, in Los Angeles, after April 30, 1992, we started to imagine “all hands on deck.” It was after this moment, 30 years ago, that chiefs of police, beginning in Los Angeles and spreading everywhere, started to say, “We cannot arrest our way out” of this. It was a beginning.

Community organizations across the country were born during this time, and research has proven their ability to reduce crime without relying on the tools of state violence. Policing has been proven to be an unsustainable way of reducing violence in the long term. We see now that it can work for a time, but this cannot be a permanent solution. We have decidedly moved from “tough on crime” to “smart on crime,” but still have much room to meet crime with a higher respect for its complexity.

On April 30, 1992, there were many factors in place that provided kindling for the conflagration. There was the mistrust between Korean shopkeepers and Black customers (born of the death of Latasha Harlins, a 15-year-old Black girl killed by a Korean-American shop owner in March 1991), intense Latino poverty, out-of-control law enforcement and a nearly clueless political establishment that all readied the blaze. As it turned out, there were many

things that needed the community’s attention as we sought to rebuild Los Angeles.

Thich Nhat Hanh, the Buddhist monk and activist who recently passed away, wrote an op-ed piece in the Los Angeles Times in 1991 after viewing the video of Rodney King being beaten by law enforcement. “We are all the beaten,” he writes, “and we are all the beaters.” A true community of kinship, such that God might recognize it, knows what this holy man knew. Consequently, we are all trying to locate some deeper current within us that can change how we see things. Separation is an illusion, and there is no us and them—just us. Scripture says what God has joined, we should not separate. This is not just about divorce but speaks to a larger love. It invites us to thrive in an abundance that allows separateness to fall away.

The events surrounding the police response to Rodney King, as well as the verdict in the trial of the officers who beat him and the riots that followed, surely underscored issues of police brutality, economic disparity and an undergirding racism. But remembering these events today pushes us to remember always that we belong to each other. Living through those times taught us that moral outrage will never be a substitute for a moral compass. Real kinship cannot be achieved simply by mastering knowledge of Christian virtues. Truth be told, morality codes have never kept us moral. But they have kept us from each other.

The poet Wallace Stevens writes, “We live in the description of the place and not the place itself.” Perhaps the unrest prodded us not to settle for the description of what we want, but to hold out for the reality of real connection



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L.A.P.D. officers advance along the south lawn of City Hall in Los Angeles, Calif., while a police car burns in the background, April 29, 1992.

and kinship. So many awakened hearts know now, as never before, that, indeed, “We the People” has never included all the people. So how do we build an economy, for example, that serves everyone’s well-being?

We must recognize that not only do we belong to each other, we must choose to belong with every cherishing breath we take. We refuse to settle for a “behaving community” and instead choose to form a beloved community. We know now that our hope resides in our communal thriving and aliveness. Perhaps we are more resolved than ever to walk each other into wholeness, which can come only from a culture of beloved belonging.

Working for the Kingdom

A homie the other day described his experience at Homeboy Industries. “The last are first here,” he said. “This is heaven on earth.” All anyone hopes to approximate is some new imagined way of proceeding, often born of the gut-wrench of disturbing riots and the dis-ease of unrest. We are all called to fashion a world in which we are the front porch of the house everyone wants to live in. The marrow of the Gospel guides us to put first things recognizably first and choose to live as though the truth were true. John Lewis, the great politician and civil rights activist, says, “We all live in the same house.” The sheer declarative nature of his statement jars us enough to put one foot in front of the next. The zen masters insist that there is no such thing as “an enlightened person” only “enlightened action.” One step. That is all we can do at the moment.

A fearless openness is within our reach, and it allows

us to shrink the space that separates us from one another. “What can separate us from the love of Christ?” St. Paul writes. Well, nothing. Anchored in that truth, we choose not to be separated from our kindness and tender hearts. We seek to heal severed belonging in our midst and know that loving never stops loving. Systems change when people do. And people change when they are cherished. Only then can we build systems of care that offset our over-built system of punishment. Only then will we stand in awe at what the poor have to carry, rather than in judgment at how they carry it. Only then will we choose to dismantle the barriers that exclude.

It is hard to retrieve everything from those events of three decades ago. To acknowledge our progress since then is not to say we are done. Though God created the world, God did not finish it. It is our common, human task to do that. For we were all born into the world wanting the same things. We are human beings. We share the same last name: “beings.” So we each, in our own particularity, try to take “enlightened action” that will get us to even more progress.

As we put one foot in front of the next, we remember, as the Irish saying goes, “It is in the shelter of each other that people live.” That consoles me as we no longer settle for the description of the place but hold out for the place itself.

Greg Boyle, S.J., is the founder and director of Homeboy Industries, the world’s largest gang-intervention and rehabilitation program, and the author, most recently, of The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness.





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WHAT'S RELIGIOUS ABOUT WOKENESS?

How the church can respond to today's calls for justice

By Sam Sawyer and Patrick Gilger

We are two years into the pandemic and the calls for racial justice after George Floyd's murder. A little more than one year has passed since the election of the second Catholic president and the violent insurrection that sought to prevent the ratification of his election. And there has never been a moment in the history of the American Catholic Church where the public voice of the church has been more fragmented.

Who speaks for the church in this moment of fragmentation and conflict? What does the church stand for? Is its most important public witness about recognizing human dignity in the womb or at the border? Is the main threat to the church an attack on religious liberty or the misuse of the tradition to reject vaccines? Ought we fight harder to defend the Judeo-Christian moral tradition against its post-modern detractors or to defend the bodies of our Black brothers and sisters from historical and systemic racism?

If these questions seem awkward and artificial, that is because they are. They do not arise from the church's own self-understanding, but instead as scripted responses from the drama of the culture wars. As soon as the questions are asked they are reduced to another rendition of "Whose side are you on?"

What is causing these seeming dichotomies, these "either/or" divides striking at the heart of the famous Catholic "both/and"? These questions do not represent actual dilemmas about the church's moral teaching, because the church's moral teaching calls for Catholics to engage vigorously in the promotion of justice in all these areas. Instead, we propose that these seemingly interminable dilemmas are in fact surface-level symptoms of a deeper struggle

over how the church can best evangelize a world that is often not listening.

Yet in practice, even when Catholic leaders embrace all these commitments, they are perceived—the church itself is perceived—as standing publicly on one side or another of the culture

wars. And so the public articulation of *what it means to be Catholic* has become a source of the very division that pains us, an ongoing experience of rivalry and ideological warfare that drives people away from communion.

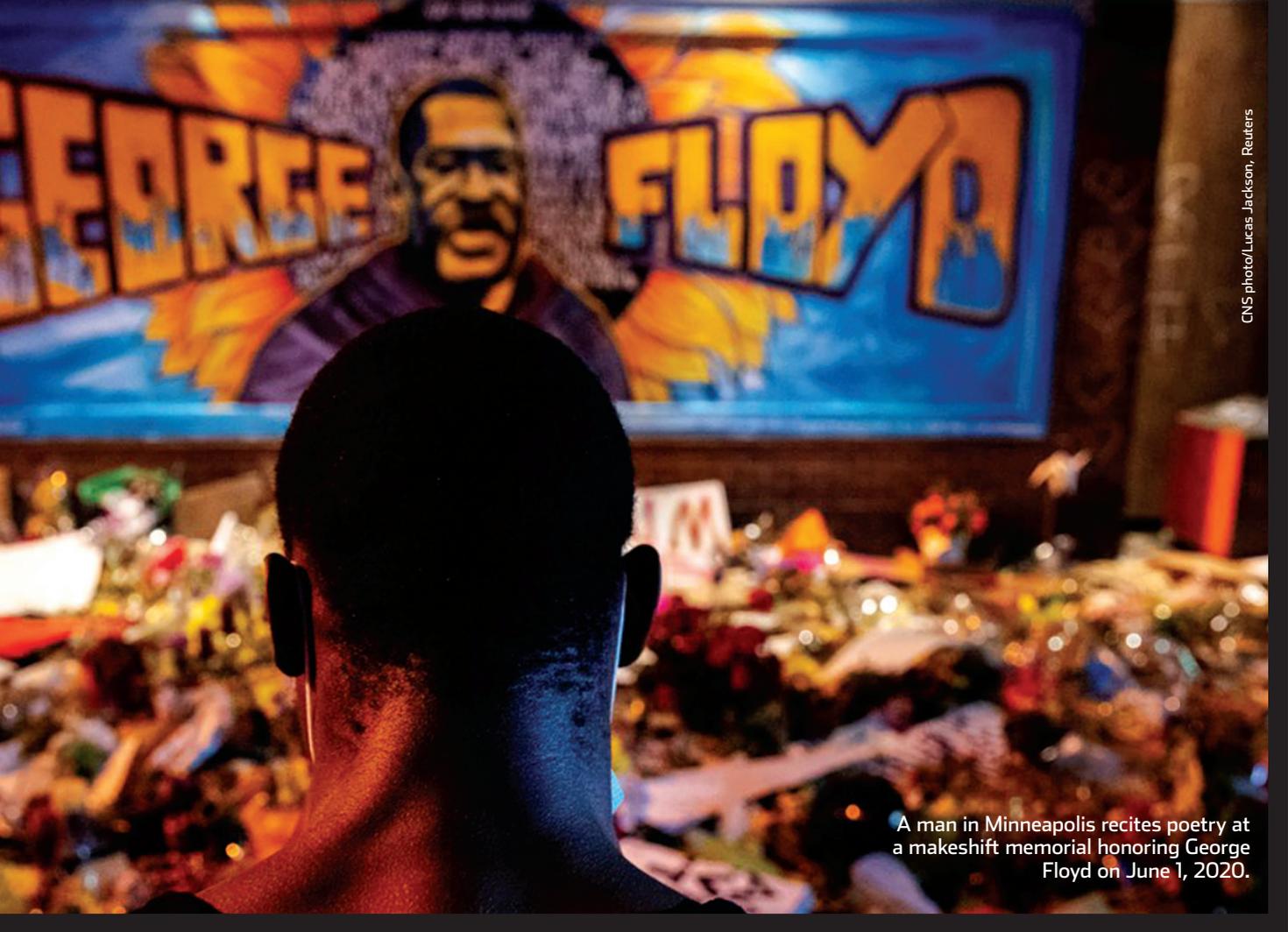
As painful as this diagnosis is, it points us in the direction of a remedy. The evangelization the church can offer is not a better ideology, but the practice of communion. The church's passion for justice arises not only from its moral certainty, but even more from its solidarity with those who are suffering. And the church can speak credibly to a fragmented world only after taking the first steps along a path of reconciliation itself.

But this is a map of division seen from 30,000 feet. How does it look from the trenches?

The Terms of Discourse

Last November, José H. Gomez, archbishop of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, gave a video address to a meeting in Spain on Catholics and public life, arguing that the church needs to understand "new social justice movements" arising after the murder of George Floyd as "pseudo-religions, and even replacements





CNS photo/Lucas Jackson, Reuters

A man in Minneapolis recites poetry at a makeshift memorial honoring George Floyd on June 1, 2020.

and rivals to traditional Christian beliefs.”

Responses to Archbishop Gomez’s publication of the transcript of his speech were swift—and for the most part entirely predictable. For some, there was outrage that a key member of the hierarchy had seemed to set the church in tension with prophetic calls for racial justice while for others, there was vindication that a leader of the church was standing up to these “dangerous substitutes for true religion.”

What was missed—both by those who were outraged and by those who felt vindicated—was Archbishop Gomez’s recognition of why these movements are attractive: because they respond to “real human needs and suffering. People are hurting, they do feel discriminated against and excluded from opportunities in society.”

In fact, the reality of this response to human suffering is why so many invested in the racial justice movements found Archbishop Gomez’s criticism of them hurtful. This hurt was not caused by his theological analysis of these movements as “pseudo-religions,” but because the choice to label these movements as idolatrous rivals seemed to reject, rather than value, their willingness to stand up for

people who are oppressed and suffering. Indeed, these movements are often felt to be some of the only public voices willing to do so.

This is not because Archbishop Gomez could not acknowledge their good intentions. Indeed, he went on to say: “We should never forget this. Many of those who subscribe to these new movements and belief systems are motivated by noble intentions. They want to change conditions in society that deny men and women their rights and opportunities for a good life.”

But the depth and importance of this insight—and its connection to why these movements sometimes function quasi-religiously—was lost because they were engaged as competing ideologies, as “wokeness” or “identity politics” or “intersectionality” understood as antithetical to religion. How did this focus on ideological incompatibility come to outweigh what seem to be very similar motivations for justice and the common good?

Writing in **America** last fall in response to the controversy over Archbishop Gomez’s address, Stephen White pointed out that the archbishop has a long history of speaking out against racism. Mr. White highlighted Archbishop



THE EVANGELIZATION THE CHURCH CAN OFFER IS NOT A BETTER IDEOLOGY BUT THE PRACTICE OF COMMUNION.

Gomez's consistent analysis that racism constitutes a failure to recognize our common humanity and that "the only sure foundation for our common humanity is our universal fraternity as sons and daughters of God."

Such an analysis aims to secure and universalize religious foundations for public moral claims. But it does so at the expense of making the operative question the *acknowledgement* of the universal foundation, rather than the *practice* of the costly justice it requires. And under the conditions of our fragmented public discourse, those who assent to the religious truth become allies, while those outside the faith who critique the failure to put that truth into practice become enemies.

A reduction of these movements calling for justice to ideologies opposed to Christianity elides perhaps the most important way they are religious. Just like a religion—and often far more visibly than many actual religions—these movements' willingness to take racism seriously offers a public response to real human needs and suffering. They meet people where they are hurting, tend to their wounds and provide a language in which they can articulate their pain. And they embrace a mission to change the conditions of an American society that all too often rejects and denies the human dignity of Black Americans and other people of color.

These are *precisely* religious actions. Even more, at their best, these shared practices produce precisely the kind of gratuitous, generous and consoling energy so often associated with religion. Archbishop Gomez was in fact correct to recognize something religious in the attractiveness of these new movements.

That is why he may also be right about their potential to function as institutional "rivals" to the Catholic Church. To the extent that they are providing the kind of coherent community, organized practices and inspiring vision of the good life that religions have long provided, it is fair to see

them as quasi-religious institutions. And to the degree that adopting those practices and identities may involve a rejection of the practice and community of Catholicism—often because Catholicism is experienced as deaf to the calls for healing and justice to which such movements attend—they are indeed in tension with it.

But this tension is inevitable only to the degree that these movements are treated as rivals to Catholicism, rather than potential partners in the work of justice to which faith calls us. There are profound differences between the church and some of these movements about how to explain the ultimate moral foundations of justice, but there are also profound parallels in our commitments to respond to the suffering of the marginalized and work for human dignity. The church ought to approach these tensions less as proof of how much these movements get wrong and more as grounds for hope because of how close they are to getting it right—and with an openness to learning from them.

A Different Mode of Engagement

A more accurate map of the trenches, from either 30,000 feet or ground level, still leaves us surveying the battlefields of the culture war. We do not want to argue that a different trenchline would serve the church better in the culture war but rather to propose a different mode of engagement: a disarmed entry into no-man's land.

By beginning with an observation of the current fragmentation of the public voice of the church, we do not lay the blame for that fragmentation on any "side" in these debates. Rather, we are describing the practical and sociological reality in which the church exists, ministers and evangelizes at this point in history. Properly understood, the challenge the church faces is not so much *secularism* as it is *secularity*: not an ideological denial of religion but instead the social context in which religion can no longer be taken for granted as the ultimate source of meaning.

That is why the fragmentation of the public voice of Catholicism—indeed, the fragmentation of public discourse overall—is the necessary frame for understanding the church's encounter with the new social justice movements. It will help us understand not just why the church's engagement with these movements is so fraught, but also why internal Catholic divisions around these questions are so painful. In this debate, the church is not just working out an evangelical strategy for how to apply the timeless answers of the tradition to the moral questions of the day but is in fact continuing to work out the church's own self-understanding in the modern world.

Earlier this year, the theologian Joseph S. Flipper argued persuasively in **America** that describing these



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THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC VOICE OF CATHOLICISM IS THE NECESSARY FRAME FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS.

new movements as “pseudo-religions” risked replicating the church’s early 20th-century anti-modernism, becoming skeptical of anything “woke” as automatically heretical and closing off necessary and healthy theological developments in the process. We would further point out that such a reaction threatens not only to chill theological inquiry but also to choke off efforts at pastoral outreach to people in these movements and to the communities in which these movements are rooted by treating them as inimical to Catholicism itself.

The temptation the church faces at this moment is to accept the fragmentation of the public witness of Catholicism in practice even while it vigorously rejects the causes of that fragmentation in theory. Hostility toward new social justice movements as ideological opponents to religion falls prey to just this temptation. It implicitly positions the church as one more ideology competing for adherents in the fragmented public space of secularity, and then preaches itself hoarse trying to convince people that the church has the most coherent answer to questions so abstract that most people are not conscious of asking them.

To put this more concretely: We entirely agree with Archbishop Gomez that “we can only build a just society on the foundation of the truth about God and human nature.” The church does, in that sense, have the most coherent answer to the crises we are facing. But all too often we in the church make the tragic mistake of forgetting that the coherence of our answer comes not from the unassailable logic of our doctrine but from the trustworthiness of our teacher. As Pope Benedict XVI said in an address to American seminarians and young people in 2008: “Truth is not an imposition. Nor is it simply a set of rules.... In seeking truth we come to live by belief because ultimately truth is a person: Jesus Christ.”

We do not need to treat everyone who begins seeking a more just society on immanent, or even avowedly secular, grounds as unreservedly opposed to transcendent foundations for truth. Doing so most often answers a question they have not asked, responding to their calls for social justice by offering to debate them about metaphysics. Worse yet, it misrepresents their passion for justice—which is at root a religious motivation, a response to God speaking in the depths of their conscience—as an ideological hostility to the idea of God.

When the church responds in this way, it is often perceived as rejecting not only these new social justice movements as ideologies, but also their call for justice itself. While this perception is not entirely fair, it is both understandable and predictable. It is an ongoing pastoral crisis. A critique of “pseudo-religion,” no matter how trenchant and insightful, will never be a sufficient response to those who criticize religious persons and institutions for our often-anemic response to the call for justice.

To some degree, this unfair perception arises because the church inevitably speaks within a fragmented public discourse. When we try to defend the church by arguing that its metaphysical grounds for justice are the most coherent, we only reinforce a fragmented secularity in which the church is merely another ideological contestant with its own jargon and intellectual framework. This kind of defense by church leaders only deepens our divisions, especially when it adopts rhetoric already associated with the culture war, thus speaking mainly to those who already share their presuppositions.

Certainly church leaders are not the only public figures who fall into this pattern of division, nor is it restricted to any particular side of the political spectrum. Such deepening tribalization is only accelerated by social media and “filter bubbles” and a thousand other maladies of our age. To return to the image of a battlefield in the culture war, these hostile responses to ideological opponents serve primarily as signal flares. They summon one’s own forces to the fight and reassure those behind the lines that the trenches are well-manned. But they do not engage the “enemy,” and they are not really meant to do so.

Healing Our Open Wounds

Recognizing the problem of fragmentation and understanding it not just as a sociological reality but also as an open wound in the body of Christ offers the possibility of responding to it in new ways. Rather than presuming that the primary need is the correction of error, that the problem is primarily ideological and can be fixed by accurate ideas, it suggests that the primary need is healing because the

problem is a wound. And this means that what is necessary is an effort at reconciliation and dialogue. This reframing challenges us to ask where we can establish common ground for doing so.

This is a daunting task. But we are not without resources to imagine how to take it up. Sixty years ago, in the opening words of the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” bishops from around the globe described a vision of a church that was capable of and desirous of sharing “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties” of contemporary humanity. Pope Francis famously described his vision of the church as a “field hospital” binding up the wounded from battle—a vision that calls on the body of Christ, which is to say the pilgrim people of God—to come out of the trenches and onto the dangerous and vulnerable terrain of no-man’s land. It is only there, after all, that we can mourn those who have been killed and be in solidarity with those who feel most deeply their loss.

Perhaps this can be more easily applied to a situation other than the tension between the church and various new justice movements. Bishop Robert Barron, who has himself critiqued “wokeness” as undergirded by “postmodernism, indeed a fairly nasty strain of it,” also said in the same essay at Word on Fire that “a shared passion for justice” might be a bridge between the church and these movements. But at other times he has described “wokeness” as “vile,” which was felt as a wound by some Catholics who already share such a passion for justice. In an essay reflecting on the challenge of religious disaffiliation, however, Bishop Barron mapped out a different approach to those who might be presumed to be opponents of the church.

Recommending Tara Isabella Burton’s book *Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World*, Bishop Barron argues for a fairly positive appraisal of the religious impulses motivating the “nones” to embrace a whole panoply of “sometimes wacky contemporary quasi-religions.” He offers these impulses as evidence that even in the West, the naïve “secularization thesis” promising the inevitable decline of religion does not hold. And he calls on Catholics to “eagerly engage” these religious instincts “with the liberating challenge of the Gospel.”

It is this same generous recognition of authentic religious desire that ought to motivate the church’s engagement and dialogue with social justice movements, even when their philosophical frameworks are not fully compatible with Christianity. Such generosity expresses a hope for



Auxiliary Bishop Roy E. Campbell of Washington, D.C., center, walks with others toward the National Museum of African American History and Culture during a peaceful protest on June 8, 2020, following the death of George Floyd.

encounter and reconciliation, confident that the church’s communion, doctrine and tradition are coherent enough that the offered bridge will not collapse when those who disagree with us set foot on it.

What is needed, in other words, is a church that is less afraid: Less afraid of being misunderstood. Less afraid to refuse being drafted into the culture wars, lest it be co-opted by one side or ignored by the other. Less afraid that the world has so thoroughly rejected God that grace can only be found within the church. Less afraid of tending to the wounded. Less afraid of being wounded ourselves.

The hope we should hold onto is that, in conforming us to the woundedness of Christ on the cross, these efforts at reconciliation will also help embrace the suffering of Christ in our sisters and brothers wounded by injustice. If the church can incarnate that example, it will go further in evangelizing people within the new social justice movements, and healing divisions in the church itself, than any critique of their philosophical anthropology ever could. The way for the church to speak credibly in public is not to attempt to win an argument, but to offer the witness of being willing to risk itself in mercy.

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BEWARE MODERN ENTHUSIASMS

It is far too easy to succumb to the claims of one's political tribe

By Francis J. Beckwith

One of the great difficulties for any thoughtful Catholic is to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff in assessing secular social movements and causes, particularly those whose leaders often make accurate observations about the moral failings of our society. You may find, as I have on occasion, your natural inclination for justice stirred—while at the same time recognizing, or not wanting to recognize, flaws in the way in which those who champion these causes frame their advocacy (or issues attendant to that advocacy).

It is not easy being a conscientious Catholic in an age of political tribalism. I confess that I sometimes find myself drawn to views and positions simply because it seems that the “wrong people” hold the opposite ones, and I suspect that I am not alone in harboring that secret shame.

A couple of months ago I was telling a progressive colleague that if Donald Trump had come out in April 2020 as supporting mask mandates, she would have likely called the policy fascist, especially if right-wing entrepreneurs had begun manufacturing and hawking masks with images of American flags and guns on them and implying that detractors were unpatriotic. We both laughed. For we both realized how easy it is for anyone to uncritically succumb to the pieties of their political tribe.

But what is a conscientious person to do when one's natural inclination to see justice done is offset by serious concerns about the moral or logical underpinnings of any particular advocacy for a secular cause? I have two examples in mind. In the case of the #MeToo movement, a righteous cause that does not go far enough in examining root causes; as for the more complicated case of critical race theory, a concept that





Parents and community members in Ashburn, Va., protest after the Loudoun County School Board halted its meeting, June 22. Many at the meeting objected to critical race theory being part of the curriculum.

CNS photo/Evelyn Hockstein, Reuters

offers an explanation of continued social injustice nevertheless clashes with other long-held values of Catholic social teaching.

#MeToo and Market Logic

Consider first the #MeToo movement. It began in 2006 with a grassroots movement founded by Tarana Burke, a survivor and activist. In October 2017, the movement went viral after a few courageous actresses and others in the film industry leveled charges of sexual misconduct against the very powerful movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. It did not take long for others to start telling their own stories of harassment and assault in the entertainment industry. As these stories increased exponentially, the #MeToo movement was born. It became an international phenomenon on social media, and by October 2018 the hashtag #MeToo had been tweeted over 19 million times.

As Catholics, we should stand in solidarity with these victims of assault and harassment, offering our support, encouragement, care and counsel. There is a valuable lesson here that the church itself has had to learn concerning its own abuse crisis: Powerful people whose souls are not tempered by lawful oversight, social custom or cultivated virtue are unlikely to treat those over whom they have authority with dignity or respect. This is why Pope Francis, in a striking letter dated Oct. 8, 2018, refers to this wickedness as “the abuse of conscience and the abuse of power.”

And yet the popular culture, infused with the sensibilities of much of popular entertainment, continues to treat sex as a purely transactional activity, as if it were a mere commodity like an automobile, a house or a flat-screen TV, subject only to the strictures of adult consent. This contractual model of human intimacy seems incapable of capturing the depth of the evil of sexual assault and harassment.

Although we would not think well of Mr. Weinstein if he had awarded a movie role to an actress on the condition that she cook a gourmet meal for him every Friday evening for a year, we would surely not think of it as akin to exchanging sexual favors for the same role. Why is that? My hunch is that it is because we know down deep that there is something sacred about our sexual powers—that they are, in a sense, set apart, since they are ordered toward a marital love whose end is to bring new life into being.

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

Kevin Jackson, 2019-2020 O'Hare Fellow



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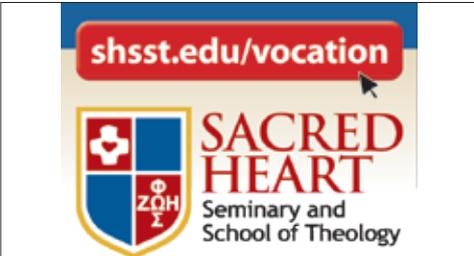
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Continued from Page 33

market logic” in our culture’s understanding of sex, as the 2014 synod of bishops observed, is relevant to why our society’s contractual libertinism is inapt in accounting for our moral revulsion to the sexual misconduct that the #MeToo movement has exposed. Contrary to what our conservative friends may think, market reasoning is sometimes not an unalloyed good.

Critical Race Theory and Parenting

Consider also the social movement among some parents that has arisen as a result of conflicts over controversial public education curricula that address race relations. It came to national attention during one of Virginia’s September 2021 gubernatorial debates when the Democratic candidate, Terry McAuliffe, remarked, “I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.” He was referring to parents who, at school board meetings throughout the state, were forcefully objecting to curricula that the parents argued had been significantly shaped by critical race theory.

Having its roots in the 1970s in the work of several American law professors, critical race theory is a social philosophy that argues that the legal application of conventional and long-held liberal beliefs about justice, due process, equality, merit, color-blindness and individual rights cannot eradicate systemic racism (and may help to perpetuate it) because American institutions were founded on white supremacy and are irredeemably racist in their composition unless they are radically transformed.

Virtually all of those parents in Virginia and other states, like many of us, came of age under the influence of the traditional civil rights narrative, which taught that the chief accomplishment of the civil rights movement was to extend the promises of our nation’s founding to those who were entitled to them from the beginning but had been unjustly denied them. For these parents, the social achievement of racial justice ultimately depends on the equitable application of those conventional liberal principles that their children’s school curricula now tell us we should reject for the sake of racial justice. In other words, it appears to them as nothing short of a reversal of the moral lodestar that guided the original heroes of the civil rights cause, that justice demands that our laws and policies be applied impartially without reference to a citizen’s race, creed, or sex.

If you are a disciple of conventional liberalism, as a large majority of Americans are, hearing the gospel of critical race theory for the first time can be quite jarring and disorienting. This is why the reactions to it are so visceral, and understandable. Nobody enjoys being told that their



WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL TO NOT FALL PREY TO MODERN ENTHUSIASMS THAT IGNORE OR REPUDIATE THE THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING OF OUR ANALYSIS.

deepest moral intuitions, instilled in them by institutions and figures considered eminently respectable the day before yesterday, are an unconscious cover for the perpetuation of oppression and marginalization.

And yet, from a Catholic perspective, critical race theory is not without merit, insofar as it draws our attention to the real possibility that a legal system, even if it were founded on unassailable principles of perfect justice, is only as good as the institutions responsible for enforcing it and the virtue of those who hold the public trust. This is why, as Pope Francis notes in “Fratelli Tutti,” there are those who “may be citizens with full rights, yet they are treated like foreigners in their own country.” In “Evangelium Vitae,” St. John Paul II laments the fact that “the various declarations of human rights and the many initiatives inspired by these declarations... are unfortunately contradicted by a tragic repudiation of them in practice.” Both pontiffs are trying to make the point that there is more to the execution of justice than the textual content of national and international legal instruments.

Modern Customs and Moral Theology

Our customs, practices, background beliefs and inherited prejudices—often taken for granted and rarely subjected to critical analysis—could very well be sources of injustice, even if in a strict sense we are innocent of evil intent. Just as the church throughout the ages has appropriated insights from non-biblical and non-Christian sources, such as Plato and Aristotle, in order to illuminate its own doctrines, the church most certainly can take what is good from critical race theory without compromising Catholic anthropology or moral theology.

On the other hand, we have to be careful to not fall prey to modern enthusiasms that ignore or repudiate the theo-

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THE DEMANDS OF NATURAL JUSTICE CANNOT BE TRUMPED BY HUMAN LAWS WHOSE GOOD END SEEMS UNASSAILABLE TO THOSE IN POLITICAL POWER.

logical grounding of our analysis. Suppose, for example, you are a Catholic and a progressive and you are convinced that critical race theory has great explanatory power and that academic lessons informed by it should have a place in every public school curriculum. Consequently, you conclude that the parents in Virginia overreacted, that their concerns should not be honored, and that the American Civil Liberties Union is right in combating curriculum transparency laws proposed in several states.

Although you are motivated by what you are convinced is central to social justice—anti-racism—and you believe that the government is obligated to advance that cause, your policy prescription seems to ignore an aspect of natural justice that the church maintains must be accorded great deference in our public life: the rights of parents to direct the religious and moral formation of their children.

As Pope Pius XI states in “*Mit Brennender Sorge*,” “Parents who are earnest and conscious of their educative duties, have a primary right to the education of the children God has given them in the spirit of their Faith, and according to its prescriptions. Laws and measures which in school questions fail to respect this freedom of the parents go against natural law, and are immoral.” And in “*Rerum Novarum*,” Pope Leo XIII tells us that the church understands the family as having “rights and duties which are prior to those of the community, and founded more immediately in nature.”

Suppose one were to gainsay this aspect of Catholic social thought by arguing that to acquiesce to the demands of parental oversight on the matters of diversity, equity and inclusion impedes the securing of social justice in our public space. After all, you may reason, all children, regardless of their parents’ beliefs, are entitled to a rightly ordered self, which surely must include the inculcation of the noble and defensible ends of critical race theory and its curricular offshoots.

The problem with this analysis is that it comes perilously close to sounding like the unsound reasoning that motivated Pope Pius IX when he defended the church’s kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara, a Jewish child baptized by his family’s domestic servant without his parents’ consent. According to Pio Nono, because Edgardo’s Jewish parents refused to bring up their baptized son as a Catholic, and because the young man’s eternal destiny hung in the balance, the Papal States—the government under which the Mortaras lived—had no choice but to place the child in the custody of someone who could accomplish that noble and defensible end, Pius IX himself.

But the demands of natural justice, as St. Thomas

Aquinas argued, cannot be trumped even by human laws whose good end seems unassailable to those in political power. To quote a famous U.S. Supreme Court opinion that sounds eerily Thomistic, “The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations” (*Pierce v. Soc’y of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510, 535 [1925]). To put it another way, the same moral reflexes that tell us that it is wrong for the U.S. government to separate immigrant parents and children at our southern border are the moral reflexes that animate the outraged parents and their allies in Virginia.

The competing moral claims and theological convictions that come into play when we try to assess the validity and the flaws of secular social movements and causes can make it a difficult exercise in discernment to separate the wheat from the chaff. As I mentioned above, it is far easier to instead succumb uncritically to the claims of one’s political or religious tribe.

For this reason, we owe each other, for the sake of our common good, the sort of intellectual and spiritual modesty one finds at the end of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”: “If I have said anything...that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.” But for the grace of God go I.

Francis J. Beckwith is a professor of philosophy and church-state studies at Baylor University, where he also serves as associate director of the graduate program in philosophy. His books include *Never Doubt Thomas: The Catholic Aquinas as Evangelical and Protestant* (Baylor University Press) and *Taking Rites Seriously: Law, Politics, and the Reasonableness of Faith*.

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT RACE



Editor's note: Every week, Gloria Purvis invites listeners to join her in a discussion of some of the most important issues facing the church today. She tackles many of the questions discussed in this forum, from how to engage with Black Lives Matter to critical race theory to what it means to be "woke." Here are excerpts from her conversations with the Most Rev. Shelton J. Fabre, the new archbishop of Louisville; and Vincent Rougeau, president of the College of the Holy Cross. Listen to her podcast at americamagazine.org/podcast.

What 'Woke' Means

Gloria Purvis. *For me and around other black people, not just black Catholics, when we use the term "woke," we mean awaken to the injustice or suffering of another. As a bishop yourself, how do you understand the term?*

Bishop Fabre. You are absolutely correct when you said, for us as Catholics being awakened is probably a better term. It's far less, you know, loaded. And I mean awakened by the Holy Spirit to the pain and suffering of another, an awakening that comes from hearing that person and story.

There was a priest who once said, I cannot say that I'm truly listening to someone unless I can accept the fact that I may be changed by what I hear. So I think it's an awakening that not only leads us to identification with regard to the pain and suffering of another but also leads us to do something about it, to the best of our ability—to allow the spirit that has awakened this in our hearts to make us instruments of Christ's healing and peace and instruments of God's justice.

Critical Race Theory and the Church

G.P. *Is critical race theory compatible with Catholicism?*

Vincent Rougeau. Well, of course it is. Not every conclusion that comes out of critical race theory is compatible with Catholicism. But how could it be the case that Catholics would not want to engage with an intellectual tool that helps deepen understanding? If the conclusions of that engagement are such that you don't believe they're correct, or you believe they're inconsistent with Catholic teaching or your faith as a Catholic, that's fine.

If you're going to reject out-of-hand analytical tools that are designed to deepen understanding, that's just anti-intellectual; it's like modern-day book burning.

G.P. *One of the things people say is that critical race theory looks at things through the lens of race, as if that in and of itself is disqualifying. Why shouldn't they look at things through the lens of race?*

V.R. We have had to labor as Black people under the burden of a racial category that was assigned to us for the express purpose of debasing and dehumanizing us and keeping us at the margins of society or even worse. And now that we are trying to break that down by using the same category that was used to oppress us, somehow, it's not legitimate. Why is it not legitimate now in the pursuit of justice, but it was perfectly fine to use it in the pursuit of oppression? So I reject that out of hand.

G.P. *One of the things I imagine you all had to deal with is the charge that it's Marxist to do these things, that it's Marxist and therefore not compatible with Catholicism.*

V.R. It makes me very uncomfortable when people say that because they said the same thing about Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement. I think that it is an attempt to deflect because people are worried about the consequences of having the conversation. There are some conclusions that some have come to through the use of critical race theory that some may find to be very much aligned with Marxism. And that may well be so, but that doesn't mean we don't engage the theory. And that doesn't mean the theory itself is Marxist.

We need to use the minds that God gave us to break down this injustice, and we need to stop labeling things so that we scare people.

Gloria Purvis is host of "The Gloria Purvis Podcast" from America Media. A radio and media personality, she has appeared in various media outlets including The New York Times, The Washington Post, PBS Newshour and EWTN News Nightly, and hosted "Morning Glory," an international radio show.

Cross Catholic Outreach's 'Wells of Salvation' Project Ensures Poor Have Safe Water

It's a scientific fact — no one can survive without water.

Fortunately, as Americans, we have sophisticated water systems that ensure we can easily obtain safe water in our homes, in our schools and in our hospitals. For most of us, a satisfying drink is as close as the nearest water fountain or tap in our house.

But how is water obtained by the rest of the world — particularly poor families in developing countries?

"It is a very different situation for them," said Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "For them, just finding water is a challenge, and even when it is located, it is often unsafe."

Cavnar and the ministry team are very familiar with these problems. He and his team specialize in international development missions, and they have been helping solve water scarcity problems around the globe for years.

They do this through a network of Catholic dioceses and parishes. This approach is more cost-effective and ensures that help reaches the poorest of the poor. With funding from Cross Catholic Outreach, local leaders manage the construction of the wells and the installation of other water systems. This partnership has already blessed many families and communities, but Cavnar believes much more could be done to provide help, particularly in Africa.

"It is shocking to see how much water scarcity impacts families in developing countries like Ghana, Malawi and Zambia. The challenges begin with finding water and the dangers involved in collecting it, but there are many other hardships too. For example, because poor families must often rely on rivers and other sources contaminated with animal waste and parasites, there is a good chance that even when a family can find water, they will become ill when they drink it." (See related story on the opposite page.)

Fortunately, solving these water problems does not require scarce



technology or complex processes. The solution typically begins with the installation of a standard well and a simple system to deliver the water to a community distribution point. The hardware works on simple mechanics and is easy to maintain once local families are trained to care for it.

"If we have the will to help, there is a way to achieve our goals," Cavnar said. "The only real hurdle is getting funding to cover the drilling process, the equipment and the labor involved. That is why we recently launched our Wells of Salvation campaign. We are trying to inspire U.S. Catholics to donate to several of our diocese-based water projects in Africa."

The Wells of Salvation water project that Cross Catholic Outreach has planned will certainly have a major, transformative impact on poor communities in Africa if Cavnar can secure its funding. It will install 65 new well systems in three different Catholic dioceses, delivering safe water to thousands of families.

In at least one of these dioceses, the project will also provide improved sanitation with the construction of eight free-standing community sanitation blocks.

"Five of those sanitation blocks will be built at school sites so we can also address the needs of students," Cavnar said. "We Americans are used to our schools being

equipped with restrooms, but facilities like those are actually rare in many remote parts of Africa. There, children often resort to open defecation or using unsanitary latrines that can transmit diseases. We want to end that kind of suffering."

These are goals Cavnar believes other Catholics will want to support, and he is confident the ministry's Wells of Salvation campaign will be one of its most successful missions of mercy.

"Everyone understands how essential water is to life. We have been blessed with an abundant supply of it, and we should want to see others have safe sources of water," he said. "This is our chance to give something back in recognition of the blessings God has given to us."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach water programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue, or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01859, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

American Catholics Have Opportunity to Bless African Families Facing Life-Threatening Water Scarcity

Agnes Mwanja is a hardworking mother of five in northern Malawi. As a subsistence farmer and homemaker, she carries out many responsibilities each day — including helping her husband with the crops, seeing the children off to school, cooking meals and cleaning the family home — but before she can tend to any of these tasks, she must begin by collecting water from the Wibogholo River.

The idea of drawing water from anything but a household tap may seem strange to most Americans' ears, but it is an all-too-common task for the poor of Malawi. Their simple homes typically lack electricity, sanitation and running water, so to survive, they resort to this challenging chore to meet their daily needs.

"There is nothing idyllic or romantic about it either," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a major Catholic ministry serving the poor in Africa. "Water collection usually means a long, hard trek through difficult terrain. The sources they must rely on are terrible, and the women face a backbreaking return home with those heavy containers of muddy water."

To Cavnar's point, Agnes Mwanja's closest source is the Wibogholo River, a small, polluted body of water that Agnes must often visit six times in a single day to meet her family's needs. Often, her daughters accompany her to help carry the water.

"When it rains, we draw muddy water. We are drinking together with animals, and you can even see the animal droppings all around," Agnes lamented.

Still, this poor woman counts her blessings when she can find water at all. During seasons of drought, for example, this river dries up, and Agnes must walk even farther to collect water from the Upiwo River (a tributary of the Songwe River). A single trip to that distant body of water takes at least four hours, and Agnes will need to go there at least twice in a day.

"During the dry season, water collection can consume Agnes' entire day, leaving little time for her to take on any other important tasks," Cavnar said. "When we think about water scarcity problems overseas, I don't think many of us consider all of the repercussions poor

families face. This loss of valuable time is an example, and it isn't even the greatest of the hardships involved."

Some of these challenges are seen. Others are unseen.

"When Agnes and her daughters make their way to the river, they may encounter wild animals, including snakes and leopards, so they must tread carefully and try to move quickly," Cavnar explained. "Imagine the stress of that — taking these daily trips in fear; never knowing whether the next turn you make might mean facing a hostile person or animal."

Then there is the unseen threat, which Cavnar believes is an even greater danger. Because the water they collect is often contaminated and contains parasites, a family is never certain if what they are drinking to survive might actually make them terribly sick. Children are particularly susceptible to such illnesses and some die as a result.

"At Cross Catholic Outreach, we make solving water scarcity challenges a priority for all of these reasons," Cavnar said. He described a current effort his charity has undertaken to supply safe water to three African locations — the Diocese of Wa in Ghana, the Diocese of Karonga in Malawi and the Diocese of Chipata in Zambia. If its fundraising efforts in the U.S. are successful, Cross Catholic Outreach will be able to install 65 safe water wells to serve families in more than 50 communities. (See story on opposite page.)

"I know Agnes dreams of the day when she, her husband and her children will have enough clean water to quench their thirst, cook, wash and take care of their other sanitary needs. I know she longs for the day her community no longer suffers



Agnes (front) collects water from the Wibogholo River — really little more than a murky stream. During the dry season, this source will dry up, and she and her neighbors will be forced to take an even longer and more dangerous trek to find water.

from waterborne diseases or faces the risk of wild animal attacks," Cavnar said. "If American Catholics will stand with me and join our effort to provide water solutions in Africa, I believe we will end those challenges and dangers for Agnes, her family and thousands of others like them. The technology is there to solve the problem. We just need to join together and help the Catholic leaders in Wa, Karonga and Chipata fund this important work."

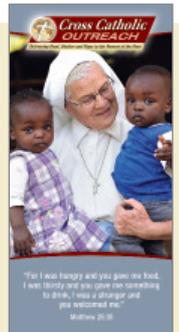
Cavnar's expectations are that American Catholics will want to help and will give generously to supply safe water to these struggling areas of Africa.

"We Catholics are very sensitive to the needs of families, and we value life dearly," he said. "We have a global perspective of our Church — and its mission too. When we see an extreme need like this, we do everything we can to end suffering, support families and save lives."

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. AC01869, 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.



FRESH HOPES, FRESH FEARS

The 'Great Resignation' and the spirituality of work

By Lucia A. Silecchia

[T]here are always fresh hopes, but also fresh fears and threats, connected with this basic dimension of human existence: man's life is built up every day from work, from work it derives its specific dignity but at the same time work contains the unceasing measure of human toil and suffering, and also of the harm and injustice which penetrate deeply into social life.

So wrote Pope John Paul II in "Laborem Exercens," his 1981 encyclical on human work. Humanity's complex relationship with work is worth revisiting in light of today's so-called Great Resignation. Since the spring of 2021, millions of Americans have left the workforce, and many may not intend to return.

On TikTok, "Quit Tok" videos celebrate decisions to leave jobs. The platform's most popular resignation hashtag, #quitmyjob, has received over 223 million views to date. More staidly, the Bureau of Labor Statistics began this year with reports that the November 2021 quit rate—"voluntary separations initiated by the employee"—in the United States increased to 3 percent, representing 4.5 million people. While that might seem like a small percentage, it was still historically high. Buzz surrounding this trend intensifies as surveys claim many more are contemplating resignations.

It is premature to predict the Great Resignation's per-

manent impact. The reasons for resignations are many. Parents—particularly mothers—left jobs because Covid-19 closed schools. Some workers resigned with pandemic-related burnout and may return after time off restores them. Concerns about contracting or spreading Covid-19 drove others away, while still others resigned in response to vaccine mandates or changes in workplace rules. Some left overwhelmed sectors like health care, while others accelerated their paths to retirement.

To understand the Great Resignation, pundits must fully assess who resigns, why they resign, what they do post-resignation, and whether this is merely a temporary phenomenon reflecting the uncertainty of the moment or a more permanent trend.

Because of these unknowns, deeper insights on human work from Catholic social teaching can contribute more to pondering the Great Resignation than today's ubiquitous "hot takes." This is particularly true of "Laborem Exercens," with its direct focus on human work. The encyclical proposes a sober spirituality of work and a lens through which to view both the "fresh hopes" and "fresh fears" that the Great Resignation may cause and reflect.

Work is the means to satisfy sacred obligations to support self, family and those who are dependent. A "family requires the means of subsistence." In love, and often in sacrifice, work sustains those entrusted to our care. More broadly, through work in diverse forms and settings, labor-

ers advance the common good by using talent and energy to create or provide what helps others flourish.

Undeniably, work is also a burden. Catholic social teaching forcefully proclaims that the dignity of the worker—made in the image of God—demands working conditions that are not exploitative, abusive or degrading. It also acknowledges that many forms of labor are inherently difficult, exhausting, dangerous and sacrificial.

In this landscape, the Great Resignation reflects both “fresh hopes” and “fresh fears” as relationships between work and the human person are recalibrated in both public discourse and individual decision making.

Using Time and Talent Appropriately

It is a fresh hope when workers re-evaluate allocations of their time and talent. Reconsidering work involves courageous self-reflection and a review of priorities. If done with thoughtful care and planning for more fulfilling new work, more fruitful use of God-given talent, triumph over inertia, increased time with loved ones or a simpler life detached from trappings of consumption, this is a hopeful sign. Decisions about how time and talent are spent are among the most important choices everyone faces.

As “*Laborem Exercens*” explains, “[m]an must work, both because the Creator has commanded it and because of his own humanity.” Further, “Man must work out of regard for others, especially his own family, but also for the society he belongs to...since he is the heir to the work of generations and at the same time a sharer in building the future of those who will come after him in the succession of history.” Each person is obligated to discern how best to be both a grateful “heir” and a generous “sharer.” If the Great Resignation prompts such reflection, it can bring great, fresh hope.

Yet fresh fear can be found in the fact that popular commentary and celebratory declarations of the Great Resignation reflect a—perhaps unintended—disparaging attitude toward work. Navigating between the Scylla of dangerous workism and the Charybdis of an equally dangerous disdain toward work is challenging. As “*Laborem Exercens*” declares, “work is a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth.” If the Great Resignation advances a view that work is an evil to be tolerated grudgingly and avoided if possible, both the common good and the individual suffer.

The obligation to support self and family should not be lightly treated. Gleeful celebrations can be a sign of disrespect toward those who do not have the luxury of resignation. It is essential to distinguish between the good of pursuing better ways to meet obligations and the harm of abandoning those obligations.

A second fresh hope lies in the way that the Great Resignation may—for now—improve worker well-being at the economic ladder’s lower rungs. Catholic teaching often assumes a paradigm in which the supply of laborers is more plentiful vis-à-vis need. Workers—particularly those who lack educational credentials, connections or skilled training—are at a disadvantage when easy replaceability weakens their bargaining power.

At the moment, the demand for workers in entry-level and lower-paid jobs is high because the rate of recent resignations has been particularly acute in the accommodations/food services and retail trade sectors; in November 2021 the quit rates for each were 6.4 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively. The result is that wages for those at the bottom of the pay scale, with fewer educational credentials, and youngest in age are increasing at the highest rates. This sign of hope offers opportunities for broader participation in the workforce and more competitive conditions, even at the entry level.

What about this might produce fresh fear? A significant number of “prime age” workers—age 25 to 54—are still not in the workforce. Recent statistics show that one in eight men in this range is not employed. While women are employed at a lower rate than their male counterparts, their employment rate has held steadier as men’s rates declined.

This falling rate of “prime age” employment is troubling. It is crucial to understand how to help adults in this cohort to find ways to share their talents and energy to serve the common good and to meet their commitments to those depending on them.

New Respect for Labor?

A third fresh hope that may spring from the Great Resignation is increased respect for undervalued labor. “*Laborem Exercens*” notes “the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person.” Yet too often less respect is paid to those whose labor is deemed less prestigious. The current shortage of workers in critical areas demands greater appreciation for their contributions. If the Great Resignation calls attention to the dignity of often overlooked workers, it is a source of hope.

What fresh fear might spring from this? Four decades ago, St. John Paul II called for “rational planning and...the right proportions between different kinds of employment... in accordance with the capacities of individuals and for the common good of each society and of the whole of mankind.” This has not happened, and thus critical needs go unmet. The misalignment between the types of workers needed and the supply of workers trained for or encouraged to enter those fields is striking.

Additionally, as debates rage about growing college debt, it is timely to ask whether other paths to meaningful vocations are undervalued or discouraged. It is critical to prepare and reward better those who do the important, life-sustaining work that is now so much in demand.

How and When Work Should Be Done

A fourth fresh hope can be found in the way the Great Resignation prompts healthy reconsideration of work's modern organization. A model in which all adults in a family are employed for pay at different locations, at set schedules approximating 40 hours a week, has not been the paradigm over the vast course of history. In the past and in other places, labor has been organized differently out of preference, necessity or both.

While idealizing other models is risky, it is beneficial to re-evaluate assumptions about whether the current organization of work well serves workers and community. "Laborem Exercens" predicted "new conditions and demands will require a reordering and adjustment of the structures of the modern economy and the distribution of work." The Great Resignation may herald the arrival of these new conditions and demands.

A fresh fear in this case lies in the unintended consequences of the rapid reorganization of work. Numerous surveys indicate that many workers now want more flexibility in the time and place of their work routines. In some ways, it is healthy to see the individualized preferences of workers take center stage. However, just as it is right to criticize employers who see employees as part of a mere contractual transaction, it can also be harmful if employees adopt a similar perspective.

Of course, this does not mean that new models should not be pursued when appropriate. But this movement may increase divisions among classes of workers in newly dramatic ways because workers in so many fields such as manufacturing, health care, child care, hospitality, sanitation, public safety, food service, agriculture and many other fields do not have these same options.

A fifth fresh hope comes in the way the Great Resignation may enhance appreciation for meaningful rest. "Burn-out" is cited as a factor in many resignation decisions. This should prompt renewed appreciation for properly ordered rest. The Catholic tradition has consistently valued the right to rest and, specifically, "a regular weekly rest comprising at least Sunday" to devote to worship of God, care for loved ones and recreation. In a society that has largely abandoned the Sabbath rest, the Great Resignation may point anew to the sacredness of renewal time.

A fresh fear that emerges with this new appreciation for leisure is that the modern world no longer understands

meaningful rest. One day of rest is no panacea for those stretched too thin to make ends meet. It never will be. But evidence suggests that "rest" and "leisure" are increasingly lonely and passive. The latest available American Time Use Survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2020 Americans spent, on average, over three hours a day watching television. People ages 20 to 24 spent, on average, an additional 1.4 hours daily playing computer games. Rest should "re-create," strengthen laborers for work and foster loving bonds of faith, family and friendship. The Great Resignation, while prompting reconsideration of work, must also prompt reconsideration of holy leisure.

Restoring Communities

A sixth fresh hope lies in the possibility that those who resign, retire or restructure work may have more time and energy to contribute to their families and communities. In addition to the potential for more meaningful rest, the Great Resignation has significant potential to advance the common good if it frees workers to engage in community involvement, increased volunteerism and time with children, elders and the needy. Unpaid work in homes, building communities, sustaining culture and serving the most vulnerable is priceless and must be treasured and celebrated.

Unfortunately, information about adults' current allocation of time does not bear out this hope. The Time Use Survey reports that in 2020, the time Americans spent volunteering was merely 0.08 hours per day on average, and only 0.09 hours were spent daily on religious activities. Caring for and helping household members (excluding children) occupied an average of 0.43 hours a day. Caring for non-household members averaged only 0.14 hours. While Covid-19 significantly reduced opportunities for volunteering and the opportunity for communal religious activities, these numbers reflect trends that predated the pandemic. This does not bode well for our communities unless the Great Resignation spurs new ways of contributing to the common good.

With a certain realistic optimism, St. John Paul II used "Laborem Exercens" to call for "the discovery of the new meanings of human work." With an embrace of fresh hopes and a commitment to address fresh fears, the Great Resignation may be a call to find, in the ancient command to work, something new and meaningful.

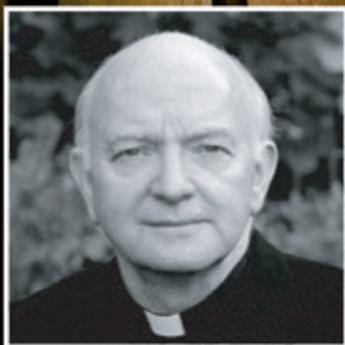
Lucia A. Silecchia is a professor of law at The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law and the author of the "On Ordinary Times" column for diocesan newspapers.



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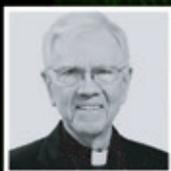
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GRAVESIDE SERVICE

You will never regret going to the funeral

By Kerry Weber

By my mother's count, I attended at least 15 wakes and funerals by the time I turned 12. It was not until I became an adult that I realized my experience was not shared by many of my peers, for whom waiting in lines at wakes was not an after-school activity.

I went because my mother went, who went because her mother went. And when I say my mother went because her mother went, it was not because my mother was coerced or prodded, but rather because she learned from my grand-

mother that This Is What We Do. This is how we show up for one another. How we honor friendships. This is how we get through the pain and help others get through theirs. My mother says my grandmother's record was three wakes in a single evening.

The list of those mourned during my childhood included my paternal grandfather, who died of mesothelioma before I turned 2 after a lifetime of fitting pipes with asbestos; my Aunt Kitty, who wasn't technically my aunt but my



grandmother's best friend; my Great Aunt Helen, who used to serve me and my brother Kraft singles alongside tea with unlimited amounts of sugar. Eventually, my funeral list included my maternal grandmother herself and, a few short years later, my maternal grandfather. Both were waked at Sampson's Funeral Parlor, where, after paying my respects, I roamed the maze-like halls with my cousins while stocking up on cheap combs and mini packs of Kleenex, all the while feeling somewhat guilty that I had enjoyed the limo ride from the church.

This is a long way of saying that I come from an Irish Catholic family.

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A recent article in *The Washington Post* described President Biden's long-time dedication to attending funerals, a task the author describes as one "frequently caricatured as the purview of vice presidents." In other words it is something that we know we should do, but would rather have someone else do on our behalf. President Biden's habit is likely based in his own Irish Catholic heritage. He also draws on his own experience with grieving the death of his first wife and daughter in 1972 and the death of his son Beau in 2015. He seems to know what my grandmother knew about funerals and grief—that *This Is What We Do*—despite the fact that through the years his staffers have, at times, urged him to do almost anything else.

For many people these days, attendance at funerals has become fraught and, at times, impossible as the Covid-19 pandemic has limited the number of mourners allowed to gather. Some memorial services have been put on hold indefinitely. But the rare observance of the tradition has also served as a reminder that it matters.

"Ritual is what humans do to help each other navigate through life's ambiguities," Bruce Morrill, S.J., the Edward A. Malloy Chair of Roman Catholic Studies at Vanderbilt University, tells me. And for Catholics the funeral Mass helps point us to the promise of everlasting life. It uses the sad occasion of the death of a loved one to remind us that the Eucharist is always "a foretaste of the heavenly banquet," Father Morrill says. The funeral Mass, he says, is "a kind of counterpoint to the grief. It doesn't erase the grief, but it is a hopeful, forward-looking ritual."

If all this sounds familiar, it should: This strange juxtaposition of death and life is what we are reminded of every Sunday at Mass. Father Morrill argues that good preaching on a typical Sunday can lay the groundwork needed to give us the courage and the theology required to support others in grief or bear our own when a death occurs. "Grief is dif-

ficult, and accompanying the grieving is not easy," Father Morrill says. "But this is the most important stuff in life and the most enriching in the long haul."

Several years ago I attended the funeral of a dear friend's father. I was able to remain composed until I saw an elderly man and woman from the parish carrying candles in the processional. They were wearing blue blazers that marked them as the servers for the day. And something about the blazers broke me. They looked like schoolchildren ready for an assignment—the assignment being to help the congregation to move within a cloud of grief, to lead us onward, tiny flames aloft. It is hard to know what to do or how to feel when we are grieving, but there is a weird sort of comfort in knowing that someone somewhere wrote down the prayers and the order of events and sent these white-haired candle bearers to walk us through it.

•••

Our tendency, at times, is not to walk through the grief at all, to avoid it at all costs. The Catholic funeral stands in marked contrast to the increasingly popular modern custom of holding a "celebration of life," which Father Morrill describes as "backward-looking and is entirely focused on the past." He cited celebrations themed around golf or ice cream. He once read about a funeral director—who preferred the term funeral concierge—who described the dead body as a "downer."

"We are in a culture that does not want to sit, even briefly, with termination, with full-stop, The End, and doesn't want to look at our mortality," says Father Morrill. The dominant culture, he says, is one that is "death concealing and death denying," rooted in "a consumerist culture that denies the limits of our physical nature and existence and the limits of time," he says. It is a culture that opens stores at 4 a.m. on Black Friday and keeps people working late on Christmas Eve. It urges us to surgically alter our bodies rather than show signs of age. In a culture of limitless consumption it is easy to ignore the fact that our time on earth is finite.

Yet there are signs that the desire to acknowledge death remains alive. Death Cafes have sprung up, gatherings held specifically to talk about death over tea and cake. Virtual memorial services for those who have died of Covid-19. Podcasts like "Death, Sex & Money," which intentionally tackles death among other hard topics.

In high school, I was excused from class to attend the funeral Mass of my friend's grandfather. The church was within walking distance of our campus, and two friends and I took the long way back—through a small park, and down

a few extra side streets with signs bearing the descriptor “thickly settled”—to process our grief. But the long gray skirts of our Catholic school uniforms were easy to spot, and one of the nuns from school happened to drive by in a car that was probably a Camry. As the sole faculty witness to the only 15 minutes of my high school career when I was not exactly where I was supposed to be, she pulled over and strongly suggested we start making our way back to class.

All too often, our society applies that same type of pressure when people are trying to grieve, pushing us to return to our normal lives, cutting short the meandering path that grief often requires.

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Every so often my mother reminds me that she does not want her obituary—to be clear, there is no indication that one will be needed anytime soon—to announce that she has “passed on to her eternal reward,” or has been “called home” or that she has “joined the angels.” She wants us to get to the point. “Make sure you say that I died,” she says.

It is possible that my mother’s own comfort with the topic of death has been formed through her constant expo-

sure to it, which has left her with the understanding that, while sad, and sometimes tragic, death is also inevitable.

“How do we convince people that death is not the worst thing in the world?” asks Joyce Rupp, O.S.M, author of *May You Find Comfort: A Blessing for Times of Grieving*. “It’s by coming close to death and not being so afraid of it.” A good funeral offers the mourners a kind of near-death experience.

The three-part restored Order of Christian Funerals, by design, gives us space at the vigil or wake service to remember our loved ones—Father Morrill suggests this is the best place to share happy memories of the deceased. At the funeral we are asked to look ahead. And at the grave we are urged to be present. The rite says to us: It is O.K. to stop for a moment, to feel everything, to not be distracted or be productive.

The wake is followed by the future-oriented funeral. The burial that follows places the grieving “profoundly in the present moment,” Father Morrill says. The burial rite is short, and “all it asks of the people are the things we know by heart—the Sign of the Cross, Lord be with you, Lord have mercy, the Lord’s prayer. It acknowledges there’s not a



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lot you can say in this moment, but we are here together.”

In the days following my grandmother’s wake, my grandfather sat down and looked through the book of names of people who had attended. More than 800 people had shown up, filed by her body, shaken his hand, hugged him, laughed and cried with him. And when my grandfather died, so great was the crowd that would miss him that it included the cashiers at the nearby CVS, who came through to offer their condolences.

Psalms 34 tells us that “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, saves those whose spirit is crushed.” Sometimes the people who sold your grandfather toothpaste can also save you.

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No one wants to be at a funeral. It means that a loss has occurred, hearts broken. But there are few other instances in which doing something we dread so deeply can mean so much. Yet it is easy to feel pressure to find the perfect, appropriate words of comfort or to feel responsible for relieving the pain. But my mother, my grandmother, President Biden and all those who make the effort to show up on these dark days know that sometimes all you need to do is to sit still with your mouth shut and your heart open.

Sister Rupp knows this firsthand. She volunteered with hospice care for 15 years and has written extensively on death and grief. But even she acknowledges having once felt the pressure so many feel to find the right thing to say to the grieving at a funeral or wake. The pressure lessened when she realized she didn’t need to say anything at all. In fact, she says, “I have found the less you say the better.”

For those who are nervous about attending a funeral or wake, she urges, “Trust that presence makes a difference.” There is kinship, she says, in knowing that we are not the only ones suffering.

She recalled the time, a few years back, when a colleague’s mother died. On the day of the funeral Sister Rupp’s schedule was packed, and she considered not attending. In the end she knew that going was the right thing to do. She arrived unceremoniously, sat in the small crowd and departed without saying much, if anything. It was not until just very recently that the colleague who had lost her mother said to Sister Rupp: “I still can see you, where you were sitting in the church that day. And I was so glad that you were there.”

Kerry Weber is an executive editor of *America*.

Christ Sighting: Lazarus

Bethany, Palestine

By Angela Alaimo O’Donnell

Deep beneath the street we found you.
The passage narrow, the stairway steep.
A space barely big enough to
stand in, let alone lie. The rock
walls thick, the ceiling low. We ducked
and still hit our heads. Tiny Lazarus.
Your story bigger than you and us.
Four feet tall, ten feet under-
ground. I could not help but wonder
how you heard your name, the women weep,
life come knocking at death’s cold door,
you fast trapped and fast asleep.
Christ’s call so loud, such a surprise,
what could you do but wake and rise?

Angela Alaimo O’Donnell’s most recent poetry book is *Love in the Time of Coronavirus: A Pandemic Pilgrimage*. Her book *Holy Land* won the *Paraclete Poetry Prize 2021*. She teaches at Fordham University.

Building a Brotherhood

Patrick E. Kelly speaks with Matt Malone, S.J., about today's Knights of Columbus



Patrick E. Kelly presents a reliquary associated with Blessed Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, to Pope Francis during an audience at the Vatican on Oct. 25.

Patrick E. Kelly is the 14th supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus, the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. He took office on March 1, 2021, after serving as deputy supreme knight for four years. He also served the Knights as vice president for public policy for 11 years and was the first executive director of the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C.

*Mr. Kelly was interviewed by Matt Malone, S.J., the editor in chief of **America**, in the William J. Loschert Studio at the offices of America Media in Manhattan. This excerpt from their conversation has been edited for length and clarity. The full video can be found at americamagazine.org/video.*

What are some of the milestones in your life that led you to become the supreme knight?

There were many. If you had told me 20 years ago that I would be working for the Knights of Columbus and even being the supreme knight, I would've said you were crazy. But it was really the Lord sort of moving me along in my life.

A very formative thing for me was service in the Navy. So I was a Navy JAG. I was a military lawyer and that was a great experience. I dealt a lot with young sailors and the problems that they had. After getting to know them pretty well, because you're representing them at a court-martial, I learned that so many of them had very fragile home lives.

They were from homes that weren't intact, or there was no father figure in their lives. And that really struck me.

And so I would work with the sailors, but I would realize that there were some fundamental issues. And that got me interested in marriage and family. So I left the Navy and went to study marriage and family at the John Paul II Institute. The theology around that—it was very seminal for me.

How was that seminal? How did it open your heart and your mind?

I knew what the church teaches, but that education gave me the “why” behind “what” she teaches. And that was wonderful. It showed me to see the human person from God's view, and that the person isn't an end and never a means. The dignity of life, the dignity of the person, the beauty of marriage—that really moved me.

You talked about how encountering young men and the problems that they face in contemporary society was one of the things that motivated you to start thinking about how you might be of service to them. How does the Knights of Columbus speak to those men today?

I think we can offer them brotherhood and a sense of fraternity in the best sense. I think a lot of times men today are suffering from a lack of meaning in their lives. And technology has just made it worse. A lot of men are hooked

on their iPhones, in the virtual worlds. I think men tend to isolate themselves more than women do. What the knights can offer is that sense of coming together as brothers for a common purpose, for a purpose that is greater than you. So you're looking with your brothers at a horizon.

I also think we offer tremendous opportunities for charity, for men to get out of themselves and to help others, with a sense of servant leadership. Individually, many of us might want to do that. But in the Knights of Columbus, we actually have a structure that allows you to do that.

Do you think that we as a church or as a society struggle to talk about these issues that confront men today?

I think that's true. But I think you see a resurgence in parishes of men's groups, and we're seeing a lot of Knights of Columbus councils getting much more involved in faith formation. And that's a really positive thing, because I think men are realizing that they want more and they're coming together in brotherhood to learn their faith. They need this, but I do think men struggle to talk about it.

We've talked a lot in the Knights about a men's Bible study, and we've been doing some work, and there really aren't many out there. I know for women, there are a lot of very good women's Bible studies, but I think there is a real need there [for men].

It seems to me that what's central to what you're talking about is relationship, this sense of brotherhood and fraternity, but also your relationship to the community. Every relationship has to be in some way procreative in the broadest sense of the word. It has to result in some kind of charity, some life-giving event or action or force. And of course that begins and ends with God.

So there's also a way in which the Knights cultivate spirituality and a life of prayer among its members. And I imagine taking on this responsibility has been a huge part of life as a knight for you.

It has been. When I first became supreme knight, six months ago, I was talking to a priest friend of mine, who said, "The number one thing is, you have to take care of your spiritual life." He said, "If you don't, with the demands on you, you will get depleted and you won't be good for anybody." I take that very seriously.

So I pray in the morning. I get up really early. We have three girls. So by about 6:30 they're awake and the house starts to get noisy. So I'm up an hour before them to try to get some prayer time in. And then I try to hit morning Mass at 7:30. And I find it to be tremendously helpful.

But I would also [point to] the Ignatian method of discerning, of trying to be objective, but also following where

there is consolation and desolation with decision making. That has helped me tremendously in my short time as supreme knight.

It's very hard to learn how to discern the lights from the shadows without cultivating that habit of prayer. Of actually reflecting day after day where God was in the course of that day. Because it seems to me—tell me if you agree with this—the distinguishing feature of Christian leadership is the sense of being led, that fundamentally, first and foremost, we are followers.

I agree. I always say that you can't be a good leader without being a good follower. And for us as Christians, we follow Jesus as the leader par excellence. There's also humility, too, because, particularly when you're new in a leadership position, there's a lot you're learning and there's a lot you don't know. But there's also freedom in that humility, to ask the questions and to be open to other ways of doing things. I think the idea of a leader without a sense of Christian virtue—that could be very scary.

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Donovan Eaton/Courtesy Loyola Blakefield

‘They Are Part of Our DNA’

By J.D. Long-García

Black alumni open the way for future students at Loyola Blakefield

Bernie Bowers had a choice to make. His parents told him he could decide which high school to attend in the Baltimore area.

This was in the mid-1970s, and Mr. Bowers had been bused to a junior high across town. “There was still some segregation and stuff back then,” he told **America**.

“I was an athlete at that point, and a fairly decent student,” Mr. Bowers said. “So I marketed myself around to see where I really wanted to go.”

His father brought him to the different schools, two private and one public, and Mr. Bowers always made sure to talk to the coaches.

“Coach Joe Brune was the head coach at Loyola at the time,” he said. “Coach Brune was the only coach that was going to allow me to try out to play the position I wanted to play, and that was quarterback.”

As a sophomore, Mr. Bowers became the first African-American starting quarterback at Loyola Blakefield in

Towson, Md., just outside of Baltimore.

“It was one of the best decisions I ever made,” Mr. Bowers said of choosing Loyola. Those four years, he said, formed him into the man he is today. And that is why he came back to the all-male school, which educates students from sixth through 12th grade, to serve as director of diversity, equity and inclusion.

In a way, the Black students who attended Loyola before Mr. Bowers helped pave the way. The school recently honored its first four Black students with a living history exhibit, dubbed “Black, Blue, & Gold.” Over the next several years, that exhibit will expand.

Kenneth Montague became the first African-American student at Loyola in 1956. According to Anthony Day, president of Loyola, Mr. Montague “opened the door for others to follow.”

Mr. Montague was followed by Timothy L. Porter four years later. When the two enrolled, they were the only Black

Timothy L. Porter, center, who in 1964 became the second African American to graduate from Loyola Blakefield, with his family at the school's "Black, Blue, & Gold" exhibit, which commemorates Black alumni.

students at the school. They both went on to become attorneys after graduating in 1960 and 1964, respectively.

Clifford J. Pugh, who graduated from Loyola in 1966, became a political campaigner and financier. Carl F. Stokes, who graduated in 1968, went on to hold elected office and became a school administrator.

Loyola's Black alumni, whom Mr. Bowers described as a "very close knit fraternity," made the exhibit happen. The four first graduates are honored alongside Frank Fischer, a former Jesuit who began recruiting African-American students to the school and securing financial support for those who needed it. He died in 2018.

The school's Fischer Program, named after Frank, encourages middle school students of color from the Baltimore area to prepare to apply to Loyola for high school. The tuition-free, three-year program begins with incoming sixth graders. During the program, participants spend five weeks in the summer studying English, mathematics and science in the mornings. After lunch, they take part in summer camp activities.

"We want to expose these kids that may not have had the opportunity in their own Baltimore city or county school system to experience what it would be like to attend a school like Loyola," said Mr. Bowers, who directs the program.

Teachers from the summer sessions visit the students throughout the year at their schools. Typically, there are 10 to 12 students at each grade level, Mr. Bowers said. This year, Loyola accepted six of them into its high school.

"There are a lot of things that the African-American alumni here really want to get involved in," Mr. Bowers said. "And I try to keep them as involved as possible. That way I can shut them up!" he added jokingly.

The alumni also founded the Frank P. Fisher Diversity Scholarship, which provides financial support to African-American students whose families demonstrate financial need.

Overall, 75 percent of students at the school receive some level of financial support, with the majority receiving need-based assistance, according to Mr. Day. Next year, students will receive \$4.5 million in aid; the average award will be about \$6,000 to help cover the approximately \$22,000 tuition. The school also offers a four-year scholarship to incoming ninth graders whose mother or father is an employee of a historically Black college or university.

To date, there have been 519 African-American grad-

uates of Loyola. Today, in a school of 950 students, about 14 percent are Black; another 6 percent are from other minority communities. That is a relatively recent trend, according to Mr. Day, the school's president.

"Over the past few years, we've been much more intentional here in recruiting faculty and staff of color," he said. There are 155 faculty and staff members at the school, 13 of whom are Black. This last year, the school saw a higher percentage of African-American families apply, and Mr. Day suspects it is related to the diverse faculty. He also noted the work of the curriculum committee, which diversified the school's offerings.

"This effort reflects our identity. This is who we are," Mr. Day said. "We don't want this to be perceived as a box we're checking, right? The African-American community here at Loyola, they're part of our DNA."

Alumni and staff are also mindful of the Jesuit history of slave ownership in the area. Georgetown University created the Georgetown Slavery Archive in 2016 to house material related to the university's ties to enslavement. Last year, the Society of Jesus announced a partnership with the descendants of people they once enslaved to reconcile and heal the deep racial wounds in the United States.

Mr. Porter, the second African-American to graduate from the school, is one such descendant, according to Mr. Bowers. "It's a part of our history and we don't shy away from it," he said.

Mr. Day agreed, adding that the mission of the school today is to meet people where they are. "Our mission calls us to the margins," he said. "It calls us to make a Loyola education, and the full experience, accessible to all."

It is a work in progress, Mr. Day said.

"I think I can speak for the community and say that we still have much further to go, and we want to go much further in diversifying both our student body, as well as our faculty and staff," he said. "That's an institutional commitment here at Loyola."

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

JESUIT SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

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





Wes Anderson Tells the Truth About Nostalgia

By Elyse Durham

There exists in the popular imagination a misconception that the filmmaker Wes Anderson is a man of style over substance. Search for his name, and you will soon be lost in a deluge of parodies, homages and outright send-ups, all featuring his signature aesthetic: bold colors, retro accouterments and a rollicking 1960s soundtrack.

These caricatures aren't exactly wrong: Being a character in a Wes Anderson movie does make you more likely to own a typewriter, wear a fur coat and drown your ennui in The Kinks. But there is much more to Anderson's aesthetic than a penchant for mid-century style. Like any good sto-

ryteller (as an auteur, Anderson writes as well as directs his films), Anderson matches his mode to his subject; his films are drenched in nostalgia, and his characters are stuck in the past.

Most everyone in Anderson's 10 films longs for some sort of glory days gone by. The teenaged Max Fischer wants to become a permanent student at Rushmore Academy. The has-been Steve Zissou longs for the prime of his youth. The adult Tenenbaum siblings move back in with their mother in search of the security of childhood. All of them are, in one way or another, stuck—until something (or someone) arrives to shock them out of their complacency. Max Fisch-

er gains courage through friendship; Steve Zissou grows up through the loss of a son; the Tenenbaums hit rock bottom and then, finding love there, are transformed.

Anderson's latest, "The French Dispatch," is no departure stylistically. Fans in search of a cinematic escape will not be disappointed. With its maximalist leanings, "The French Dispatch" seems tailor-made for those of us who spent the last two years wearily watching Netflix from home. Following the lives and work of a team of expatriate journalists, it is stuffed to the gills with storylines (five), settings (dozens) and characters (upwards of 300). Extraordinari-

There is much more to Wes Anderson's aesthetic than a penchant for mid-century style.

ly detailed set pieces and '60s-era pop music abound.

And so, of course, does nostalgia. No one in "The French Dispatch" is quite at home in their world, or with themselves. But there is something different at work here. Unlike Anderson's previous heroes, the cast of "The French Dispatch" does not long for the past; they yearn for a reality that has never existed. Young revolutionaries attempt an upheaval of social norms. An unmarried woman-journalist-of-a-certain-age wishes to be seen as a professional instead of an object of pity.

Most striking of all is Rosenthaler, a convicted murderer who is living out his days in the psychiatric ward of a prison. "I've been here 3,647 days and nights. Another 14,603 to go," Rosenthaler says. "I drink 14 pints of mouthwash ration per week. At that rate, I'm going to poison myself to death before I ever see the world again, which makes me feel—very sad." Though Rosenthaler has known little but addiction, mental illness and despair, he suspects there is more to life than this—though he does not know why, and unlike the Tenenbaums and Max Fischer, he does not know how to find it.

Perhaps as a reflection of this thematic shift, "The French Dispatch" takes Anderson's aesthetic and turns it inside out. Gone are the typical candy-colored hues. Rosenthaler's story, along with the bulk of the film, is shown in black and white, which reinforces the monotony and emptiness he feels. Any of us who remember the isolation and interminability of lockdown (and who doesn't!) can relate to this experience of colorlessness.

But, like every Anderson film before it, "The French Dispatch" is optimistic at its heart. Its characters are not left to languish but are brought back to life by startling moments of grace. Hope comes twice to Rosenthaler, first in the form of Simone, the beautiful and elusive prison guard with whom he falls in love. When Simone rejects his affection, Rosenthaler then turns his passion to painting, still inspired by her loveliness. "What do you want to paint?" Simone asks. "The future," Rosenthaler says, "which is you." Rosenthaler's canvases appear on screen in vivid color, blazing pinks and reds and oranges made all the brighter for their contrast to the grayness of the prison.

Anderson uses this "Wizard of Oz"-like device several times in the film, jumping from black and white to color and then back again. Most often, these shots capture sensual experiences. A noisy coffee shop bustling with students, a tryst between young lovers and an exceptionally good meal are all filmed in color. Each depicts a key moment in a character's life, a moment when beauty unexpectedly bursts in and changes them forever—akin to what J. R. R. Tolkien described as a "eucatastrophe." To see these sudden flashes of color is like walking through a museum and encountering a vivid religious painting or icon that stops you dead in your tracks, providing an experience of beauty so acute (and realer than our reality) that it almost feels like pain—like nostalgia.

The word *nostalgia* comes from the Greek *algia*, or pain, and *nostos*, homecoming—suggesting, as Anderson's characters often experience, the impossibility of going home again, of

living in exile. Toward the end of "The French Dispatch," a heroic cook, lying wounded after the rescue of a kidnapped child, articulates this feeling when he describes being an expatriate. "Seeking something missing," he says. "Missing something left behind." The journalist at his bedside, himself an expatriate and social outcast, can relate. "Maybe, with good luck," the journalist says, "we'll find what eluded us in the places we once called home."

Even before Covid-19, we were all exiles in this world, hungry to return to a goodness and beauty lost in the Fall. Now, with the threat of illness and death still looming nearly two years into the pandemic and a future without Covid becoming harder to imagine, we might experience nostalgia more acutely than ever. Perhaps that's why Wes Anderson's work resounds so strongly in the popular imagination. We all long for homes to which we cannot return.

In one eerily prescient moment of "The French Dispatch," which was written and filmed years before Covid-19, a woman who has lived through a revolution longs for normalcy. "What will normal reality be?" she wonders. "Next week, next month, whenever, if ever, we get to experience it again. Anyone's guess."

Anyone's guess indeed. But as long as we look for the icons in this world, and in each other—and as long as there are people like Wes Anderson to remind us of them—we will always find a place to call home.

Elyse Durham is a fiction writer and essayist. Her work has appeared in *Image*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Christianity Today* and elsewhere. She lives in metro Indianapolis.

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Corpus Christi Honeymoon

By Patrick Reardon

Let us honeymoon
in the Texas town with the Latin name.
Let us hide out together
under the sacrament's cipher.

Let us head west into Texas and swing back
to wade in Gulf water, chary of jellyfish,
ugly as the thin plastic Walmart bag
in the branch of today's winter tree.

Let us jacket up in the early autumn cold,
not hot Florida, not Hawaii bright,
our own clouded place no one else would think of,
medieval as the vestments and the ceremony,
two coals burning incense clouds to the heavens,
abandoned pretty much to the harmony of us,
our transubstantiation of body and body.

Let us foreign ourselves for a week in limbo,
watching TV election returns,
a relative's midterm victory back home,
as if gazing from a pleasant Mars,
empty of going and doing,
capsuled, cocooned, changed and changing,
our own bread and wine.

Let us emerge today as we have each morning
since that vacant shoreside week,
together, to fresh surprise and communion.

Patrick T. Reardon is the author of 10 books,
with two forthcoming in 2022: *Puddin: The
Autobiography of a Baby* and *The Lost Tribes*.



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Revelation and Healing: A Father and Son Reunion

recounts the author's slow journey from an adoption that left him longing for his biological mother and wondering about his biological father. Discovering, while in high school, his mother's identity, years later he found that of his biological father, Lionel Durand (1920-1961), a Black man born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Suddenly the author realized the source of his own immediate empathy as a boy with Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement he led. The author shares the often-shocking details of his adoption, and the therapies that brought him healing, therapies helpful not only to adoptees but to all who need healing from emotional suffering and losses of all kinds. With filial admiration, the author traces the life of his beloved father, Lionel Durand, friends with de Gaulle and Picasso, an internationally acclaimed newsman and journalist, who fought in the French Resistance during World War II, twice imprisoned, twice escaped, and whose struggles for peace and justice mirror those of our own day. Welcome to this reading journey and its wondrous surprises.



Cover painting by Lionel Durand



Lionel Durand broadcasting for Voice of America

Paperback and Kindle editions available on Amazon.



Bob Fitch/Bob Fitch Photography Archive at Stanford University

Dorothy Day shares a meal with volunteers at the Catholic Worker farm in Tivoli, N.Y., in 1968.

Notes on a Revolution

In 1912, Ralph Adams Cram helped publish Henry Adams's book *Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres*. Cram, an Anglo-Catholic socialist, did not see the book as a mere academic monograph. He hoped that readers of the book would have an "encounter with the religious past" that would move them to "criticize the industrialist capitalist order and to imagine a better future." The contemplation of the radicality of the Middle Ages, he thought, would catalyze a Christian socialism opposed to both modernity and capitalism; a book about a Christian past was supposed to be the ground of a new Christian future.

This story opens Jonathan McGregor's *Communion of Radicals: The Literary Christian Left in Twentieth-Century America*. The anecdote situates McGregor's hopes for his book. If contemplation and criticism can lead to imitation, then writing about the literary Christian left of the

last century might help establish a literary Christian left for *this* century. Whether encountering obscure writers—Vida Scudder, James Dabbs or Cram himself—or well-known figures like Dorothy Day, T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden, we are meant to see in them possibilities for the future. This is an academic book with a mission.

McGregor offers something more interesting than another paean to Catholic literature's past. It is more interesting because it recovers Christian literature's radical social critiques. To develop an understanding of Christian literature as an agent of revolutionary love requires arguments that run in differing directions. For instance, his chapter on T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden argues that these two literary figures were writers on the left. When writing about Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, he argues that these two leftists were literary figures. At other times, he maintains the general relevance of forgotten figures like John Wheel-

wright or Scudder. The complex argumentation makes sense in an academic text. However, it is part of the challenging tension of a book that sometimes cannot choose between being an academic book and a source of political and literary renewal.

McGregor creates quite the challenge for himself: Develop a theory of radical Christian literature, fit writers into it and ground a revival of such literature. He mostly pulls it off (although I am not so sure about John Crowe Ransom's place in the book). His writing on Southern Christian radicals develops an anti-racist tradition of Southern thought. This is particularly compelling in his writing on Walker Percy. He shows how integral anti-racism was to Percy's Christian humanism. For me, Percy provides hope for the union of anti-racist and pro-life advocacy. McGregor's interpretation of Percy's *The Last Gentleman* moved me to pull the novel off my bookshelf.

Communion of Radicals
The Literary Christian Left in Twentieth-Century America
By Jonathan McGregor
LSU Press
268p \$50

Reading about Day and Maurin, I was reminded of the beauty of their writing and the moral force that beauty conveyed. They showed that writing can sometimes move mountains. These chapters are literary scholarship at its best; McGregor makes you want to read Day and Maurin again or read them for the first time.

McGregor's section on Claude McKay is another highlight and an important interpretative key to the text. The poet, novelist and convert to Catholicism developed a commitment to the medieval that exemplifies the radical potential of an authentic Christian traditionalism. McGregor writes that McKay developed "an orientation to the past—a traditioned radicalism" that set him apart from his literary peers and other leftists. His Catholic Worker poems "drafted medievalism into service for Black liberation."

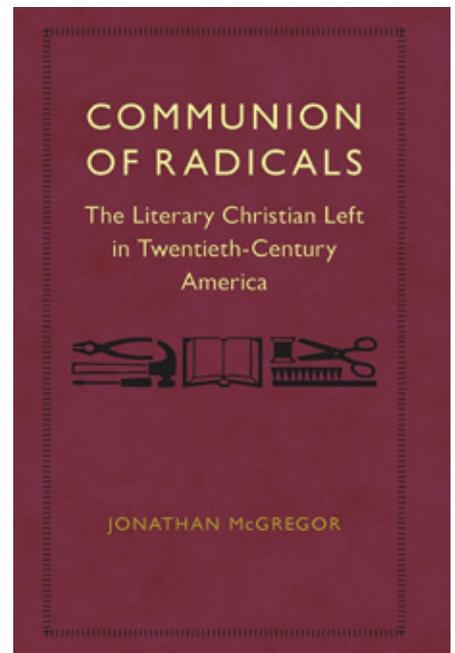
The drafting of the medieval for radical social causes is a unifying theme in this book. The medieval becomes a position from which to reject the rapaciousness of capitalism and the flattening secularism of liberalism and Marxism. The writers within deploy the medieval as a counter-possibility to modernity, one marked by egalitarian economics, anti-racist principles and deep religious convictions. Radical medievalism is the kind of political motivation that could help, to quote Maurin, "create a new society within the shell of the old" with "a philosophy so old that it looks new."

It was not just medievalism that united these thinkers; there was also their religious orthodoxy. Their motivation was the conviction that "human equality and human community are

achievements won by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the one who unites all humanity to God in his Incarnation," McGregor writes. As the Christian left seems to be withering away and the Christian right grows in its commitment to uniformity, inequality and exclusion, encountering the radical potential of the Gospel and the church in poets, essayists and novelists is encouraging. It is not that poets are the "unacknowledged legislators of the world," as Shelley would have it. Rather, for McGregor, literature is "one parcel of the field of cultural conflict." If the Christian left is to be revived, it will need poets, novelists and artists. It will also need scholarship like McGregor's.

At the end of McGregor's book, I felt a tension: Was this well-written scholarship a source of optimism or pessimism? McGregor is right that if a Christian literary left is to be part of a revival of a truly Christian politics, it will need to hold onto an orthodoxy that grounds social change while working with other movements on the left. But the prospects for both orthodoxy and Christian social change seem grim as we face a Democratic party increasingly detached from religion and attached to abortion rights, and a Republican party whose rightward drift shows little sign of abating.

McGregor's conclusions about "Weird Christians" and "Tradinistas" made me think there is a future for the Christian left nowhere else but in such categories. But McGregor does not promise a political program or claim an optimistic outlook. He promises a well-researched vision of the past—and of tradition and orthodoxy—to



help enliven a Christian literary left. More importantly, his book promises a little hope, a virtue quite different from optimism or pessimism.

Hope does not disappoint; hope commits itself to the work of God and the works of mercy. We may need to follow the path of Auden in developing suburbs of dissent that foment a "monastic revolt against Empire." Or perhaps a broader movement can come about through a commitment to justice and Jesus that grounds society in actual Gospel values. The future is unknown, but books that remind us of past writers like Day, Eliot, Percy and McKay offer the challenge to imagine and build a new and doubtless very different future.

Terence Sweeney is an adjunct professor of philosophy at Villanova University and scholar-in-residence at the Collegium Institute.

Appropriating Imperial Power

The prolific classicist Mary Beard, a professor at the University of Cambridge, has written books on Pompeii, the history of Rome, the Colosseum and the Roman triumph, among many other books and academic articles. She also engages with popular perceptions of the classical world through her blog, published by The Times Literary Supplement, and her popular Twitter account. In *Twelve Caesars: Images of Power From the Ancient World to the Modern*, an engaging, erudite and enormously informative book, she analyzes the reception and adaptation of ancient Roman imperial portraits in Western European and American art from the 15th century to the present.

Her topic is relevant to anyone who has wondered why a statue of Benjamin Franklin by Francesco Lazzarini—commissioned in 1789 for the Library Company of Philadelphia—shows him clad in a toga. And why in September 2021, just as Beard’s book was published, the equestrian statue of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee was removed from its base on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Va.

The idiom of the bronze equestrian statue perhaps seems generically triumphal to contemporary American viewers, but it is as reminiscent of ancient Rome as the toga. This artistic style descends from famous surviving antecedents like the second-century bronze equestrian statue of the emperor Marcus Aurelius that was mistakenly believed in the Renaissance to depict the fourth-century Christian emperor Constantine. (Though Beard

does not discuss this example, misidentifications of imperial portraits are a major theme of her book.)

Beard’s fascinating book asks its readers to be curious about, and critical of, redeployments of the images of Roman emperors from the Renaissance in Italy to 20th-century America. What choices do artists and patrons make? How might ancient Roman imperial portraits be received (and misunderstood) by later audiences? What do images of Roman emperors tell us about the later cultures in which they were reproduced?

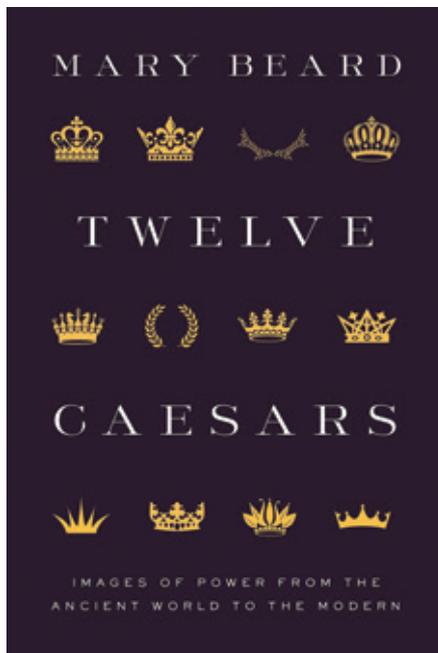
The opening vignette of the book presents a marble sarcophagus, allegedly used for the burial of the emperor Alexander Severus, who ruled in 222-235 A.D. It was discovered in Lebanon in 1837 and brought to the United States by Jesse Elliott, an American navy commander. Elliott donated it to the nation in 1845 and hoped that Andrew Jackson might choose to be buried in it. Jackson declined vehemently, writing that as a patriotic American and lover of republican values, he did not want an imperial burial.

Beard illustrates the story with a photograph of two visitors at the sarcophagus in 1965 reading a label about Andrew Jackson’s refusal. Beard makes quick work of this legend: Not only did the marble sarcophagus not belong to Alexander Severus (who was probably buried in Rome, not in Lebanon); there is no indication that the sarcophagus belonged to any Roman emperor. But those facts matter less than the role that the ancient Roman “imperial” sarcophagus served in fashioning American presidential identity in the 19th century, and as a reminder of the strength of American democracy for visitors to the National

Mall in the 20th century.

Beard’s book is full of these evocative and occasionally startling examples (among them, an ancient marble head of Julius Caesar dredged from the bed of the Hudson River in 1925). The chapters can stand alone, as they cover discrete topics such as “Coins and Portraits,” “The Twelve Caesars” (on sets of images of emperors, such as the silver gilt dishes known as the Aldobrandini Tazze) and “The Most Famous Caesars of Them All” (on Titian’s 16th-century paintings of Roman emperors displayed in Mantua, Italy). This division and the focus on images reflect the book’s origin in the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts that Beard delivered at the National Gallery in London in 2011; *Twelve Caesars* is an updated and expanded version of the lecture material.

After this first group of chapters, Beard shifts to analysis of those reuses of Roman imperial iconography that were not necessarily positive. These include tapestries created for Henry VIII that seem ambivalent about royal power (whether or not the royal patrons were aware of it), as well as portraits that convey lessons about imperial vices. Beard also devotes a chapter to portraits of imperial women, showing how they were used historically: For example, images of Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, served in the history of art as an exemplar of familial devotion and loyalty, in contrast to those of the younger imperial Agrippina, mother of the infamous emperor Nero. The author also presents a gory medieval manuscript painting of Nero calmly observing his mother’s dissection in order to see her womb, no better representation of anxiety about maternal power.



Twelve Caesars

Images of Power From the Ancient World to the Modern

By Mary Beard

Princeton University Press

384p \$35

It is hard to imagine anyone other than Beard writing this book. Her granular knowledge of ancient Roman history, literature and art, bridged with an encyclopedic understanding of the visual culture of neoclassicism in art, creates a book of great interest to scholars, students and a general audience. Beard's analysis ranges confidently across media—paintings, sculpture, tapestry, coins—and eras, with most of the analysis focusing on the 15th through 17th centuries.

Her analysis is insightful and groundbreaking. She reattributes a silver gilt dish at the Victoria and Albert Museum that was associated with Domitian, noting that the scenes shown on part of the dish come from the life of Tiberius. Beard

also points out that the generic “scenes from the life of Julius Caesar” depicted on tapestries made for Henry VIII are actually illustrations of “Pharsalia,” the epic poem by the first-century poet Lucan.

A caveat related to the ambitious range of material is that the chapters can overwhelm the reader with their level of detail. Beard is both comprehensive and precise, with the result that some sections of this book (especially those describing reconstructions of lost monuments) require sustained concentration (and rereading) in order to follow.

Beard ends her book with a photograph of the current milieu of the Roman “imperial” sarcophagus that Jackson declined to use for his tomb. It lies in the Smithsonian's storage in Maryland, obscure again after its brief moment in the sun as a symbol of American democracy.

Rita Keane is a professor of art history at Drew University in New Jersey.

A Scholar's Lessons

Luck is a fine thing. It provides us with some of our greatest opportunities. Sometimes it even provides us with our greatest cover; what some might chalk up to “luck” is really a humble way of avoiding saying that the individual has accomplished their great achievements through determined hard work, cultivated intelligence and focused endeavor. Most of the time, it is a profitable confluence of these factors that leads to success. In the case of one Jesuit from Tiltonsville, Ohio, the true value

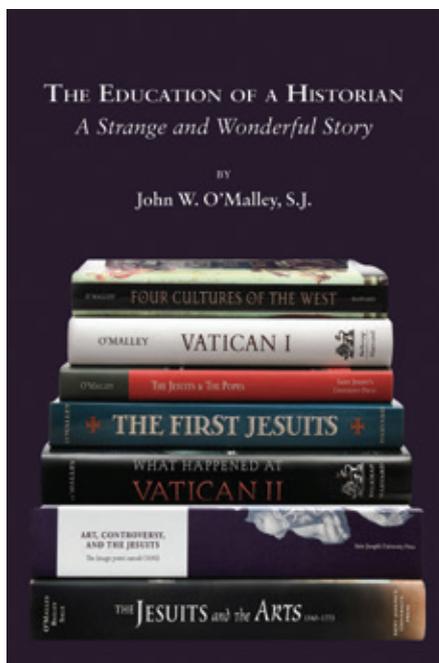
of “luck” is a lesson for us all.

In his recently published memoir, *The Education of a Historian: A Strange and Wonderful Story*, John W. O'Malley, S.J., the lauded historian and author, offers a charming, insightful and deeply honest account of his life that is infused with wit, humility and sagacity.

O'Malley puts forward the purpose of the book rather directly. Providing more than a little color from his own life, he sets forward his method of work, including how and why he approaches his subjects of study. He also stresses his conviction that all people, even historians, are embodied spirits who are observing and analyzing facts from a particular cultural and historical perspective—a conviction exemplified by O'Malley's presentation of his own life and work.

Memoirs by scholars and notable personages frequently fall into the trap of settling professional scores, leveling charges or jumping or defending ideological fences, or they fail to escape the dual failings of self-aggrandizement and self-justification. O'Malley stays far away from these arenas of autobiographical turpitude. Rather, what he offers is a unique homage to those who have made his life better, displaying effusive gratitude for his family, his brother Jesuits, his confrères in the world of scholarship, his academic mentors and the many friends he has made in his long life. With what can only be described as a sunny disposition, O'Malley begins with gratitude in all things.

Born in Tiltonsville, Ohio, in 1927, O'Malley describes his childhood in terms of classic Americana, with its ethnic neighborhoods and churches, the boom and bust of the Depression



The Education of a Historian
A Strange and Wonderful Story
 By John W. O'Malley, S.J.
 St. Joseph's University Press
 124p \$30

and the onset of the Second World War. O'Malley entered the Society of Jesus in 1942, was ordained a priest in 1957 and went on to secure his doctorate from Harvard University. He studied at Villa I Tatti in Florence, worked in Rome during the Second Vatican Council and later took a professorship and subsequent leadership roles at the University of Detroit (now the University of Detroit Mercy).

He went on to participate in the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1974-75 (a monumental event in the order's history). He published four books and edited eight more; taught at Weston Jesuit School of Theology and Georgetown University; delivered countless papers, lectures and speeches; and received numerous accolades. He is now

university professor emeritus in the theology department at Georgetown University. In 2019, he published his latest scholarly work, *When Bishops Meet*, at the age of 88.

O'Malley chalks up the successful outcome of each of these phases of his life to luck. He is so honest about his life that it is difficult to believe, even when he explicitly notes it, that so many of his journeys were the products of nothing more than good fortune. He is straightforward about his experiences with the Detroit riots of 1967, of how he felt secretly witnessing an interracial marriage in Chicago, of battling depression while living in Austria and of the challenges and difficult discernments he made throughout his life.

Amid this chronicle of his long academic career and many publications, O'Malley never lets himself or the reader forget that this is a human story, one where the unexpected can intervene in substantial ways. Sometimes it really does come down to luck. Through the honesty that he has employed in his research and writing over the last 60 years, the historical method that O'Malley wishes to describe to readers is best exemplified here in this memoir, in the way he shapes the tale of his own life: fortune, fate, human endeavor and community.

For O'Malley, life's journey is not identified solely by one's responses to external and internal events, but by the way these intersect. In his own experience, O'Malley highlights the Second Vatican Council and General Congregation 32 as two of the most influential intervening moments in his own life. Both events formed his views on the mission of the universal church (a term he would challenge the reader

to define) and the Jesuits, and what his own role as a historian meant for his relationship with these institutions.

Throughout the book we are offered insights on life, including many clear and carefully chosen examples of how to approach serious work with candor and care and how to lead a fulfilling life. In this letter of affection to the church, the Society of Jesus and the academy, O'Malley provides a personal example of thoughtful and discerning service, brilliance in the pursuit of truth, humility in the face of accomplishment and gratitude for those with whom we are blessed to make this earthly journey. We are lucky to have such a record for future generations.

Nicholas D. Sawicki is associate director of development for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and a frequent contributor to *America*.

Finding Our Way Back to The Farm

I have done my fair share of farming, at least for someone in his early 20s who lives in a city. The first time I worked in agriculture was the summer after my junior year of high school, when I worked five days a week at a community garden in Washington, Conn. Working for my boss, Denise, in the pale, humid glare of summer mornings, I learned the principles of organic farming: manually plucking green, thumb-sized hornworms from tomato plants; planting flowers like marigolds to enrich the soil instead

of using chemical fertilizer; weeding by hand instead of machine-gunning plant beds with herbicides.

It is this type of farming, integrated with the natural world, that James Rebanks advocates in *Pastoral Song: A Farmer's Journey*, a book that is half memoir of farm life, half manifesto against modern agricultural practices.

Rebanks, an Oxford University graduate from the north of England, is not officially an environmental scholar or the founder of some conservation nonprofit. Born of a long line of farmers, he uses his intimate knowledge of both the land and the people who work it to take a stand against today's mechanized and inhumane methods of cultivating plants and animals. Rebanks's background transforms a persuasive argument about the damage of modern farming techniques into a personal testimony pulsing with frustration and despair, but ultimately hope.

Like an ecological triptych, *Pastoral Song* showcases the past, present and future of agriculture's relationship with the environment. In the first 100 pages, Rebanks reminisces in vignettes on his boyhood spent on his family's farm in the fells of Northern England. He recounts how he was taught to perform the daily tasks of the farm by his grandfather, an old-fashioned farmer wary of technological disruptions to agriculture.

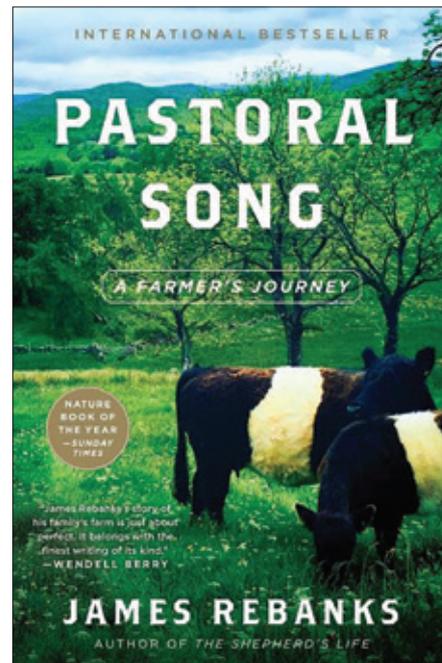
The second section of the book changes focus to three years after his grandfather's death. Now Rebanks's father has taken on the onus of managing the farm just as the economic austerity measures of the Thatcher years in Great Britain have reached their peak. Eschewing his own father's phobia of technology, Rebanks's father begins to use pesticides, fer-

tilizers and a host of other modern techniques that promise small family farms some chance against the ascendant large industrial farms. But as the growing of crops becomes more efficient, Rebanks recalls, the soil grows poorer. Flooding in the nearby town intensifies and the wildlife that once populated the fields disappears. His father comes to regret the destruction this new style of farming has wrought, but the economics of farming leave him with little choice but to continue.

Finally, Rebanks writes closer to the present, after his father has passed away, leaving the farm to him. Rebanks too has come to appreciate his grandfather's skepticism of profit-driven agriculture. Environmental advocates, sympathetic to the challenges of farming, provide him with suggestions to harmonize his farm with natural landscapes. Bit by bit, Rebanks begins to implement methods of farming that allow natural flora and fauna to live side by side with livestock and crops.

Ultimately, Rebanks offers a hope for the future, though it is qualified. We humans do have the power to stop the extinction of species, the polluting of waters and the destruction of the wilderness. But, he says, it is naïve as well as unproductive to envision a perfect balance in which nature and humanity are both able to thrive at full capacity. "The logic chain is simple: we have to farm to eat, and we have to kill (or displace life, which amounts to the same thing) to farm," Rebanks writes. Going into the future, nature will be compromised as long as we feed ourselves by means of agriculture. The key is to minimize harm.

The book pushes against the tendency in environmentalist circles to jump to utopian ideals of farming



Pastoral Song
A Farmer's Journey
By James Rebanks
Custom House
304p \$28.99

without considering the practical realities of the labor needed to get there. Rebanks bristles at the idea that the farmer's life is any sort of retreat from the responsibilities of work. Instead, "I've come to see that the reality of being a farmer is anything but an escape from the world; it is often like being a slave to it," he writes. When Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, God was up front with them that producing food would be sweaty and back-breaking work. Rebanks knows this experience well.

He reminds us that human farmers remain central to the agricultural process, even as impersonal supermarket shelves insulate consumers in wealthy countries from this reality. The rise of corporate farming has resulted in plummeting prices for agri-

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cultural products, so family-run farms are rarely able to stay afloat. In what could pass as a brusque paraphrase of Pope Francis' "Fratelli Tutti," Rebanks writes: "None of us can escape commercial realities, but we can try to reshape our society to make it fairer, more decent, and kinder. I am sick of 1980s economics bulls—t."

Nevertheless, it is clear that Rebanks also appreciates the beauty inherent in his family's otherwise thankless trade. As he writes about his farm, his words often skip like stones on the boundary between prose and poetry: "The old farmhouse glass" has "whorls, like knots in an oak-tree trunk"; and he recalls how his arms, after picking berries from a thorny bush as a boy, were "scratched chalky with the barbs." His great skill for metaphor demonstrates a deep love for the tiniest details of his farm, as if they are glimpses of the divine countenance.

Pastoral Song comes amid a renewed interest in returning to humanity's agrarian roots. Many thousands of people have developed an interest in TikTok accounts run by farmers, chronicling the personalities of various animals alongside quotidian barn chores. This trend reveals

a longing that many people carry in the recesses of their souls for something better than the current urban-centered way of living, working and being. Unfortunately, few ultimately act on these transcendent urges because their imaginations have been calloused by society's insistence that there is no alternative to a corporate, capitalist economy.

As Rebanks sees the situation, this hunger to return to the land is part of a story spanning generations, something from which we cannot extricate ourselves no matter how hard we try. In the industrialized West, "we act as if we popped into town to earn a living a generation or two ago, but will be going home soon to a place in the country," he writes.

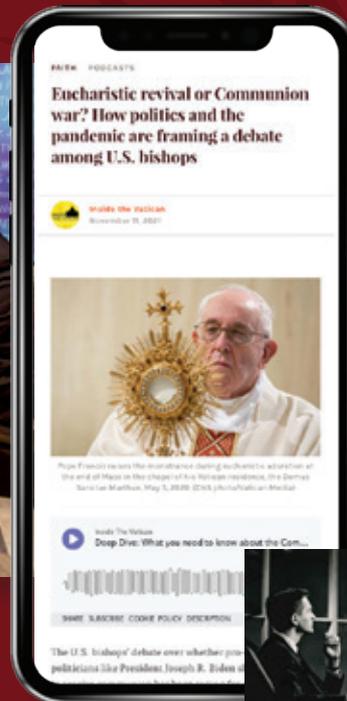
For the most part, *Pastoral Song* does not offer a concrete game plan for finding our way back to the farm. Instead, the great value of Rebanks's book is the framework it provides for readers to examine how they want to live their lives in relation to the earth, our common home.

Doug Girardot is a Joseph A. O'Hare fellow at America. He graduated from Boston College in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in history.

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Peace Be With You!

In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, causing immeasurable chaos, destruction and death. The effects of these attacks continue to reverberate today, and reflections and calls for peace are in order.

In the Bible, *shalom* in Hebrew and *eirene* in Greek are two of the most common words translated as “peace.” *Shalom* is well known, sometimes used even without translating, as a way to greet another and convey a wish of goodwill and wellness. The root of the word relates to being whole and complete, and it can suggest that physical and spiritual needs are being met. *Eirene* has similar connotations and is frequently used as a greeting and departing salutation.

Shalom is often juxtaposed to war, and it can be offered and accepted as a means of conflict resolution. Although many of ancient Israel’s ideas about warfare are problematic, the importance of peace for preventing and ending fighting is an ideal that can inform our thoughts on war today. Now more than ever, peace agreements and commitments need to be made and kept.

Shalom and *eirene* can also have more nuanced theological and spiritual meanings. For instance, when Zechariah reflects on a time of restoration and covenantal renewal, he instructs his community to ground themselves in fairness, truth and peace (Zec 8:16-17). In a vision of divine reign, Isaiah notes the significance of just and righ-

teous actions, saying “the work of justice will be peace” (Is 32:16). The Letter of James, too, connects righteous behavior, mercy, wisdom and peace (Jas 3:17-18). Epithets such as “Prince of Peace,” “Lord of Peace” and “God of Peace” are also found in Scripture, connecting divine presence and actions with peace.

Shalom and *eirene* are prominent in Scripture, and their connections to human and divine interests, justice, righteousness and mercy should not be missed. Scripture offers countless reminders that peace is something we should wish for ourselves and others, and we are all called to pray, work and support efforts at achieving peace.

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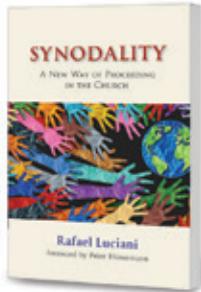
Jaime L. Waters teaches Scripture at DePaul University in Chicago. She is an associate professor of Catholic studies.

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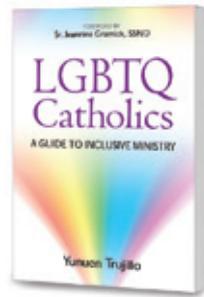
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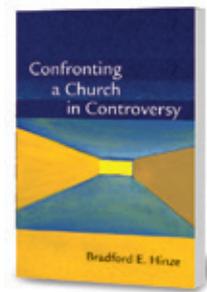
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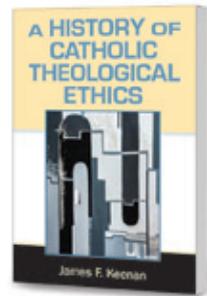
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This one goes out to my fellow Catholics.
The ones who are searching for answers.
Who wonder: "Does the church want someone like me?"
Who struggle to vote for either party.
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We get you.

THE CATHOLIC STRUGGLE IS REAL

But that's what we're here for.
Let's talk about prayer, doubt, sexuality, race, life and the death penalty, and everything in between. It's time to ask the tough questions. It's time for honest conversation.
Because our Catholic faith belongs to all of us, not just the pope and the priests.

It's time to *#OwnYourFaith*

A Calling with Purpose

The new reality for religious sisters

By Laura Teresa Downing



When I take a moment to really think about the fact that I am a religious sister, I am struck by a sense of wonder. How did a cradle Catholic born in the early 1980s in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., who had a dream wedding planned by the age of 8, become an Immaculate Heart of Mary sister?

My journey began in a stereotypical Irish Catholic family. My siblings and I spent our days shuttling between catechism classes, Scout meetings, Irish dance classes and soccer practice. Other than our Aunt Peg, a Sister of Mercy, our childhoods were largely devoid of “nuns.” Still, the “Sister Act” films were a staple of our family movie nights, and sometimes I wonder if this was a sign that I initially missed.

My first inkling of a religious vocation occurred when I was in fifth grade, the one year I attended Catholic school. I was walking to recess and saw my principal—a sister I tried to avoid because of my many uniform violations—walking toward me, and I suddenly had a sense that I would be “like her” one day.

My vocational discernment began in earnest when I enrolled at Immaculata College (now Immaculata University) in Pennsylvania. At that time there were about 50 sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the faculty, and I was captivated by their joy and what I came to call their “holy normalcy.” These obviously prayer-

ful women would cheer at basketball games, laugh uproariously in the cafeteria and call a spade a spade. I found that my fascination with the sisters gave way to daydreaming about becoming one.

But it was a mission trip to Calao, Peru, that sealed the deal. During my time working at a girls’ school and doing outreach to the surrounding community, I was with sisters who often spoke of their vocation within a vocation. At the time, I wondered if I would ever have such a specific sense of purpose and mission. But now I have it, and it helps me fit into a community that is overwhelmingly made up of sisters who are my parents’ age and older.

Currently, I live with 27 sisters, and we range from our early 40s to our late 80s. Sometimes the age gap can be hard, and not just because everyone asks me to solve their technology problems. But it may be harder for the older sisters: Not only do they have to listen to Dave Matthews Band songs wafting through my bedroom walls and the fact that I say “sweet” more often than they would like, but the fact that my vocational experience is now so rare represents a loss to them.

The older sisters think of the life-giving things that I do not experience but were part and parcel of the community when they were young: the large groups they went through formation with, a comradery born of

having many sister friends their own age. Sometimes I wish I could have these things too, but I never expected to. These moments are eased by a quick video call or text with someone of my generation.

The truth is that our reality as women religious has changed and continues to change. We cannot seek to recreate the religious life of the 1950s and ’60s in order to fill our ranks and staff our institutions. One’s religious life is now permeated by intentionality—the choice to enter, the decision to remain, the discernment of ministries and missions. Nothing can be taken for granted, so there is a deep gratitude for what is and excitement for what is to come. This is important to remember because we can too easily and too often become distracted by stories about the aging of our religious communities.

The truth is that wonderful things are happening in our religious communities, because God is not finished with us. In my day-to-day religious life, I continue to be inspired by the joy and holy normalcy of the sisters that I live with—even if they are always asking me to fix the television.

Laura Teresa Downing is a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She made her final vows in 2009 and serves as the director of campus ministry at Immaculata University in Immaculata, Pa.



ORDER OF MALTA
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

POSITION

The American Association of the Order of Malta seeks to hire a Director of Development & Membership Engagement. Reporting to the Executive Director, this individual will assume overall responsibility for the capital raising needs of the organization. Primary duties will entail developing and executing comprehensive strategies/programs to identify, cultivate, solicit, recognize, and steward all donors and prospects, including major and planned gift prospects from both corporations and foundations. The Director of Development also will be charged with the proper disbursement of capital assets to the Order of Malta Pilgrimage Foundation and the Malta Human Services Foundation, a provider of international disaster relief.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The desired candidate will possess at least ten (10) years of experience in fund raising for non-profit organizations, with a consistent track record of success in achieving capital campaign goals on time and within budgeted resources. He/She will be thoroughly versed in all phases of grant writing and possess proven abilities in the creation and execution of new fundraising programs.

The selected candidate will be highly intelligent; possess superb verbal and written communication skills; be a high-energy, results-oriented, and proactive individual; and be able to fully identify with, and effectively articulate the mission and charism of the Order.

Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in a relevant field of study required; master's degree preferred. Proficiency in the use of MS Office applications required as is the ability to travel to visit existing donors; prospective sources of new funding; and quarterly management meetings in New York once pandemic conditions allow.

COMPENSATION

The successful candidate will receive a competitive base salary; incentive bonus compensation plan; and a generous program of employee benefits.

ABOUT THE ORDER

The Order of Malta is a lay religious order of the Roman Catholic Church. Founded in 1099, its express mission is to defend the Catholic faith and care for the sick and the poor. The American Association is made up of 1,800 members throughout the United States. For more information on the Order and its works, please visit www.orderofmaltaamerican.org.

Interested candidates should submit their resumes via email (including current compensation data) in confidence to:

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