

America

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EYAL PRESS • AND MORE

A Convert Looks At Vatican II

JOHN JAY HUGHES



OF MANY THINGS

Tony Judt was a public intellectual, born in 1948 into a Jewish Marxist family in England, who served two years in an Israeli kibbutz and then in the Israeli Army during the 1967 War. He studied all over Europe and finally found a distinguished home at New York University. There, beginning in 2008, he died slowly of Lou Gehrig's disease while, with the help of Timothy Snyder, he composed his summing-up book, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (Penguin, 2012). When he died in 2010 at age 58, he had published 13 books, including *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals 1944-1956* (1992), which established him as a voice to be reckoned with.

I encountered him first on a television documentary about Pope John Paul II and again in essays in *The New York Review of Books*, including his proposal in 2003 that Israel and Palestine become one binational state. Named for a cousin who died in the Holocaust, he never shelved his Jewish identity; but as a man of integrity, he could not embrace all of Israel's policies.

Reading *Thinking the Twentieth Century*—in which Snyder engages Judt through fascism, Nazism, Communism, socialism, social democracy and capitalism—is a mixed pleasure, like sitting alone in a Paris cafe overhearing two very smart people rattle on about people you have never heard of—Ota Sik, Maurice Thorez—only to perk up at the mention of Stephen Spender, whose poetry course I took in 1967. It's good to be reminded how little one knows.

In most reviews of *Thinking*, Judt is revered; although Francis Fukuyama in *The New York Times Book Review* slaps him for criticizing certain writers (including Fukuyama) and for his judgments on Israel. But *Thinking the Twentieth Century* is a high-level intellectual dialogue, which is why book reviews, as a literary form, exist. Judt tells a story about Norman Davies,

author of *Europe: A History*, whom he offended in a review in *The New Republic*, but who generously reviewed Judt's masterpiece, *Postwar* for *The Guardian*.

Judt used his dying years to tell us: Western intellectuals, except George Orwell, took too long to spot the evil of Stalin's Communism; the historian's first obligation is to tell the truth, then put it in context; the Iraq war was wrong from the start, and pundits like David Brooks and Thomas Friedman, who supported it, were ignorant and shallow; the intellectual must be a moralist, unafraid to raise his voice, though supporters will lack the courage to speak.

I have never feared death. But in the late 1970s I was hit with a pinched nerve which for months kept half my body in pain. The following year, when I moved to Rockhurst College in Kansas City, I suffered a weakened right arm and pectoral muscle. After several visits, the neurologist told me I did not have Lou Gehrig's disease. I was stunned. I had never even considered it! For 40 years I have screened out the idea of a long, fatal disease by which I would melt away. But now I write this inspired by Tony Judt, history teacher and social democrat, who spent his last two years in a final attempt to convince us that universal health care, public transportation and equitable taxation are fundamental to the public good.

NOTE. After typing that last line I took a walk in the Philadelphia woods to a path that led to railroad tracks. The closest exit from the tracks was a station 90 yards ahead; so I walked the track, looking up from time to time for trains, and at the station stepped off onto the road. Suddenly, Whoosh!!! A train roared at 70 miles an hour through the spot where I had stood. Had I not left the track 10 seconds before, I would have been splattered afar—the "quick" death I thought I preferred.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J.

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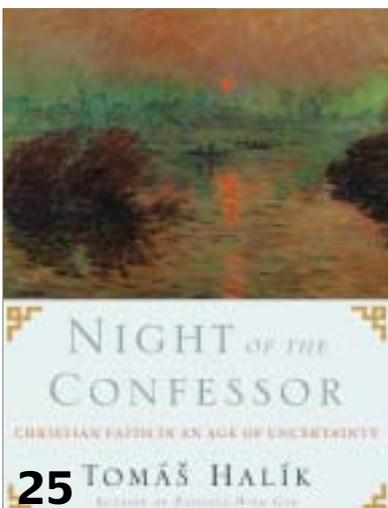
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ON THE WEB

America's Book Club discusses *With God in Russia*, by **Walter Ciszek, S.J.**, right. Plus Jon M. Sweeney reviews the film "Blue Like Jazz" and archive coverage of **Vatican II**. All at americamagazine.org.



Nonviolent Revolution?

Genuine democracy is still a long way off, but Myanmar (Burma) has made progress. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (and her National League for Democracy Party), denied power by a military junta and kept under house arrest after she won the presidential election 22 years ago, is back in parliament—not as president but as an elected representative of the people. President U Thein Sein, a former general and member of the ruling junta-backed party who became president a year ago, has been surprisingly reform-minded. He has released hundreds of political prisoners, broadened eligibility for political candidates and reformed banking and currency exchange. But the motivation of Myanmar's powerful military is unclear. Is democracy the goal, or is the intention to garner economic assistance while nipping the buds of any Asian Spring?

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has lauded the April election. She announced that the United States would restore diplomatic relations, easing the way for international foreign aid. Thomas Carothers, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has called the parliamentary election “a doorway to a possible democratic transition.”

Given 50 years of military rule and a constitution still under discussion, full democracy in Myanmar seems years away. But reform is possible. Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi's patient witness to nonviolent revolution, which earned her a Nobel Prize and focused global attention on Myanmar, could be just what the country and its new president need to bring democratic reform.

Despair and Defiance

Few acts of individual sacrifice and protest are as dramatic and horrifying as self-immolation. Though suicide is never morally justifiable, self-immolation has at times effectively drawn attention to injustice. In the early 1960s, the self-immolation of monks drew worldwide attention to the mistreatment of Vietnamese Buddhists. The Arab Spring movement began in Tunisia after a street vendor engaged in this striking act of despair and defiance.

But more than 30 self-immolations in India and China recently have not succeeded in capturing global attention. The deaths are a grim testament to the rising desperation of Tibetans as thousands of Han Chinese “immigrants” threaten to overwhelm Tibet's unique culture, language and religious tradition. Chinese officials have gone to great lengths to limit media coverage.

“There is no such thing as a Tibet problem,” a Chinese

spokesperson glibly declared in October after the first wave of self-immolations, an official position confirmed by the practical silence of world powers. Though pro-forma statements of regret have been issued periodically as the body count grows higher, the world has come to accept with diminishing complaint China's cultural and political annexation of Tibet. Tibet's government-in-exile is promoting a “third way,” calling for political and cultural autonomy but not outright independence for Tibet. It is a reasonable path forward that may offer a face-saving way out for a newly emerging generation of Chinese leaders, who may be seeking a conciliatory resolution to decades of confrontation over Tibet. If these deaths draw attention to this alternative and inspire U.S. support, they will not, as now appears to be the case, have been for nothing.

A Tale of Two Parks

Two new ballparks opened at the start of the 2012 baseball season. On April 4, ESPN televised the national debut of Marlins Park in Miami, Fla. The 37,000-seat stadium is home to the newly branded Miami Marlins, a team that boasts a new coach and several high-profile free agents. The stadium seeks to emulate the glamour of Miami's famed South Beach. A swimming pool sits beyond the left field fence. Below the seats behind home plate there are aquariums with nearly 100 swimming fish.

In the Bronx, N.Y., Cardinal Hayes High School opened the season on its home field for the first time in years. The team traditionally played home games in a public park adjoining Yankee Stadium. When the Yankees built a new stadium in 2008, the Cardinal Hayes squad was displaced. After years of wrangling between city and team officials, Heritage Field opened earlier this month on the site of the former Yankee Stadium. While not as costly as Marlins Park, which cost over \$600 million of taxpayer money, the public park includes some expensive details, including a professional-grade grass outfield.

Jeffrey Loria, owner of the Marlins, claims his team's new field will be a boon to the city of Miami. Perhaps. Yet only a few players will have a chance to play there; on most nights the stadium will be baseball free. But dozens of teams have expressed interest in competing at Heritage Field, which is open to the general public. Located in a densely populated urban neighborhood, the park is likely to be busy into the twilight hours. One can easily imagine generations of young athletes playing on these fields. Will the same be true of Mr. Loria's baseball palace? Or will it be torn down in a generation, like many professional stadiums, in favor of something new and even more extravagant?

The Latest Thing

Over the past decade and a half, Apple has transformed itself from a fading computer manufacturer into an unchallenged global technology leader. Its sleek products have fundamentally altered the way people all over the world communicate, create and educate.

Is Apple, an innovator both commercially and culturally, on the verge of once again altering reality, this time on the manufacturing floor? Maybe. An investigation of an Apple subcontractor uncovered numerous violations of human dignity and Apple's own corporate ethics code. Now both Apple and its subcontractor, Taiwanese manufacturing giant Foxconn, have promised fundamental change.

Much of Apple's success has rightly been attributed to the vision, taste and obstinacy of its late founder, Steve Jobs. But he had a blind spot for one group of Apple stakeholders who have played an essential role in the company's achievements—its vast manufacturing work force. After leapfrogging sites around the world, location-scouting for the most "willing" labor force, Apple settled most of its manufacturing in China. That choice has helped enrich Apple and its shareholders, but it has increasingly drawn public criticism. For all its contemporary innovation, Apple relies on an outdated industrial model.

At its comfortable corporate headquarters in Cupertino, Calif., Apple's professional staff enjoys hefty salaries and corporate perks unimaginable to most working people in the world. But thousands of miles away, Apple's manufacturing workers live in the 19th century, captive to Apple's changing production schedule, sometimes roused from company barracks in the middle of the night to meet iPhone demand spikes. Workers live inside Foxconn's vast factory compounds, shop at its stores and eat at its cafeterias, working often more than 60 hours a week, sometimes seven days in a row without rest. In China, Apple has found a vast, vulnerable work force eager to do the company's bidding; poverty leaves them little choice.

Apple's production grind exacts a high price from workers and their families. Industrial accidents have led to deaths and serious injuries. A wave of worker suicides at Foxconn facilities testifies to the desperation on the factory floor. Worker pay, even after recent hikes, remains less than \$17 a day. Apple has so far declined to share its fat profit margins with the people who solder and assemble its magical products. With almost \$100 billion in cash reserves, Apple could propel a transformation of the lives of "cheap"

laborers throughout the developing world with just a minor adjustment to its profit expectations.

Toward the end of his career, Steve Jobs showed increasing awareness of this issue; and his successor, Tim Cook, has wasted no time confronting the problem. Apple took the unprecedented step recently of inviting a third-party review of standards and practices at Foxconn, its largest subcontractor and, not incidentally, the subcontractor of choice for other manufacturers, like Amazon, Dell, Microsoft, Sony and Samsung. The Fair Labor Association gave Foxconn "the equivalent of a full-body scan," investigating conditions at three massive factories and surveying more than 35,000 workers.

Following the unflattering outcome of its investigation, the association has secured "groundbreaking" commitments from Apple and Foxconn that will reduce working hours, improve health and safety conditions and establish "a genuine voice for workers." Nearly two-thirds of workers reported that monthly wages were not adequate to cover basic expenses. Responding to these deficiencies will move Apple closer to the minimum standards for the treatment of workers articulated over generations by Catholic social teaching—among them, a just wage, humane work schedules and conditions and the right to form unions.

There are some who are already critical of Apple's industrial altar call, dismissing its new attention to labor standards as a public relations stunt. Others say that Apple is merely applying an ethical veneer to the market-driven evolution of China's working people from desperate global patsies to savvy job-switchers. Skepticism is called for, but so is hope. The bottom line is that a new accountability has been accepted by one of the most powerful employers in the world. Apple and Foxconn's commitments bring new pressure to bear on other corporations to conduct similar examinations of conscience.

This new corporate concord includes monitoring provisions that will measure compliance, but much will depend on the attitude and attentiveness of consumers in the affluent world. In this matter public sentiment emerged not out of a desire for the latest thing, but as an expression of solidarity with overseas working people most consumers will never meet. Apple—and other outsourcing U.S. corporations—would be wise to adjust to this market demand.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

IMMIGRATION

How Far Can States Go to Control Their Borders?

When the U.S. Supreme Court considers the constitutionality of Arizona's 2010 immigration law on April 25, the weight of an eventual ruling will come to bear on far more than one border state's relationship to its own residents. A half-dozen states that have passed laws modeled on Arizona's and 20 that have considered doing so could all be affected by the outcome of *Arizona v. United States*, as could the practices of churches, employers and social service providers. "Copycat" legislation roiled other states over the last year, particularly Alabama. That state's law includes provisions that made it illegal to rent or provide utility service without proof of the customer's immigration status. Thousands of immigrants moved away, leaving Alabama's agriculture industry reeling.

The Supreme Court is being asked to settle the constitutionality of four key provisions centered on the question of whether immigration is solely the enforcement concern of the federal government or whether states can act independently. These key provisions require that state and local law enforcement verify the immigration status of every person arrested or detained if there is "reasonable suspicion" the person might be in the country without permission, make it a crime for immigrants to fail to carry their "alien registration document," criminalize working for pay without authorization from immigration authorities and allow officers to arrest someone without a warrant if the officer thinks there is "probable cause" that the subject is guilty of a crime that could lead to deportation.

A friend-of-the-court brief filed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops notes the church's teaching on family unity and the government's interest in having immigration policies that enable families to stay together. It also said state immigration laws pose "a serious threat to religious liberty" by criminalizing acts of assistance to undocumented immigrants. Churches have a moral and religious duty to help

all in need, according to the brief, and Arizona's S.B. 1070 and similar laws "threaten this Catholic mission to provide food, shelter and other care to all."

The U.S. bishops argue that "a patchwork set of state 'harboring' regulations like those of S.B. 1070 would seriously threaten the Catholic Church's mission to serve all in need. The effort of the United States to establish a single set of immigration laws thus constitutes a sound federal objective that this court should particularly respect."

Another amicus brief, joined by more than 50 Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Jewish organizations,

argues that Arizona's law assumes every person fits into one of two categories, "lawfully present" and those who are not. "In reality, even U.S. citizens often will not be readily identifiable, and where noncitizens are concerned, determining a person's immi-



Protesters oppose Georgia's immigration law in Atlanta last year.

gration status requires a nuanced legal inquiry, which cannot be performed by police on the beat.”

The brief, whose signers include the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Franciscan Action Network and about 30 congregations of women religious, said the court’s ruling will “shape the fates of people nationwide.”

“In states such as Utah, Indiana, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina, people of color will be subjected to constant scrutiny regarding their immigration status—and to the demeaning experience of criminal arrest and detention,” it said. State immigration laws “divide our nation between those regions where people of all ethnicities can freely travel, live and work and those where they cannot.”

IRAN

Preventive Strike Lowers ‘the Bar’ on War

While Iran’s secret nuclear program has raised serious questions about that country’s intentions, a military attack on Iranian nuclear facilities would not, in view of the U.S. bishops and other Catholic leaders, be justified under Catholic teaching. “The problem with preventive war is that it lowers the barrier to war too low,” said Stephen Colecchi, director of the bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace. “Using military action for a vague and gathering threat is very different than using military force in the face of an immediate threat,” he said.

That path “blurs that fundamental distinction between legitimate defense and aggression,” said Gerard Powers,

director of policy studies at Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. “It would make a turbulent and unstable Middle East even more so.

“It would be inconsistent with moral certainty that is required before you use military force, because it is often speculative about what might happen in the future. In the end it is an endorsement of a notion that might makes right,” Powers said.

Various reports have surfaced indicating that Israel is nearing a decision on a military strike in an effort to knock out some of Iran’s key research and military facilities. President Obama reportedly has worked to deter any such strike, arguing that economic sanctions will force Iran to scale back its nuclear program, become more transparent about its intentions and allow wider access to International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors.

Kenneth Himes, O.F.M., associate professor of theological ethics at Boston College, agreed with the U.S. bishops that any attack on Iran under current circumstances constitutes a lowering of the threshold for war. “Given the state of the devastation of war, we should be raising the bar for going to war,” he said. Father Himes also worries that Iran might respond through its regional proxies— Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon—in mounting attacks on civilian targets.

Father Himes said he would welcome direct negotiations between U.S. and Iranian delegations. Doing so would give Iran a level of respect it seeks in the international community, he said.

Despite the secrecy sur-

rounding Iran’s nuclear program, Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International, said she is concerned that any attack will hasten the expansion of an arms race in the region. She called for the United States to lead the effort to make the Middle East a nuclear weapons-free zone.

Pax Christi feels very strongly, she said, that the threat to the state of Israel will be exacerbated by preventive war on Iran. “The best way to provide for security for Israel—which it has a right to expect, like Iran—is by eliminating the possession of nuclear weapons,” she said, “so that we ratchet down this kind of threat and that we work for greater regional and global understanding.”

The Catholic Church in the United States and in other states that possess nuclear weapons states can “take the lead and be really serious about the consequences of continuing reliance on nuclear weapons,” Dennis said. “We’ve never moved as a church to a place where we as a pastoral imperative challenged the engagement of Catholic people in nuclear weapons production and the strategies of using nuclear weapons.”



An Israeli woman joins a protest March 24 in Tel Aviv against a possible attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Fighting 'Femicide'

A majority of the most dangerous countries in the world for women are found in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region where patriarchy is increasingly clashing with a changing role for women. Of the 25 countries with the highest homicide rates for women, 14 are in this region, according to the Small Arms Survey, based in Geneva. "Women are being killed and are subjected to abuse just because of their gender," said Virgilio Almanzar, director of the Dominican Human Rights Committee in Santo Domingo. The murder of women has been known as "femicide," a term commonly used in Latin America but rare in the United States. While some, including Catholic officials working on the issue, see signs of progress, like new laws and public awareness campaigns, observers say changing the deep-rooted culture is a slow process.

Demand Liberty

American Catholics must resist unjust laws "as a duty of citizenship and an obligation of faith," the U.S. bishops Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty, wrote in a statement released on April 12. The document, titled "Our First, Most Cherished Liberty," calls for "a fortnight for freedom" from June 21, the vigil of the feasts of St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More, to July 4, Independence Day, as a "special period of prayer, study, catechesis and public action." The statement cited a number of clashes over religious liberty currently confronting the church—most notably the continuing dispute with the Department of Health and Human Services over a new mandate on contraception. Among other examples of "religious liberty under attack," the bishops named immigration laws in Alabama and other states that "for-

NEWS BRIEFS

Supreme Court justices in Brazil voted on April 12 to legalize the **abortion** of fetuses without brains or those with malformed brains. + About 75 **Occupy San Francisco** activists were arrested on April 2 when police officers removed them from a building owned by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. + Governor Dannel Malloy of Connecticut has pledged to sign a bill approved by the state legislature in April that will make Connecticut the 17th state to abolish the **death penalty**. + On March 30 **Anna Maria College** in Paxton, Mass., rescinded its invitation to Victoria Kennedy, widow of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, to speak during spring commencement ceremonies after Bishop Robert J. McManus of Worcester said he found her an "objectionable" choice. + Members of the **Sisters of the Presentation** in Pakistan's Swat Valley on April 11 celebrated as "a sign of resurrection" the reopening of a girls' school that had been destroyed by the Taliban in 2008. + During Holy Thursday Mass, **Pope Benedict XVI** criticized dissent from church teachings and disobedience of God's will as illegitimate pathways toward reform and renewal and cautioned against calls for women's ordination. + **Anglican parishes** in Philadelphia and Indianapolis were received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church in early April, and two Anglican bishops in Canada were slated to lead their clergy and congregants into the church later in the month.



Victoria Kennedy

bid...what the church deems Christian charity and pastoral care to those immigrants" and new government regulations across the country that have "driven local Catholic Charities out of the business of providing adoption or foster care services" because the agencies would not place children with same-sex or unmarried heterosexual couples.

Vatican Investigates Irish Redemptorist

The Irish Association of Catholic Priests said it is "disturbed" that the group's founder, the Redemptorist priest Tony Flannery, is under investigation by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In a

statement on April 9, the priests' association—which represents about 20 percent of Ireland's 4,000 priests—affirmed "in the strongest possible terms our confidence in and solidarity with Father Flannery." The group said that the Vatican's "individual focus on Father Flannery and inevitably, by implication, on the members of the association, is an extremely ill-advised intervention in the present pastoral context in Ireland." In the past, Father Flannery has called for reconsideration of the church's teachings on a variety of issues, including the ordination of women, the ban on artificial birth control and mandatory priestly celibacy.

From CNS and other sources.

SMALL TOWN SEEKS PARISH PRIEST.

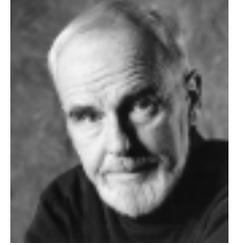


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Our Alien Bodies

We humans have bodies. We also are bodies. That is the profound reality of embodiment, of being personal bodies. It is also our most personal challenge. If we are ever able to accept who and what we are, we have to accept the rich but often ambiguous paradoxes of being body-persons.

We experience our bodies as limits, but at the same time they are opportunities to be real and engaged in the world. Our bodies are our self-revelation to the world; but they often conceal our full reality. We can experience them as objects of study and we can discipline them when we learn to walk or dance or play a musical instrument. At the same time they are glorious revelations of our self-knowledge, in art and science, or in a beautiful union of the physical and spiritual when we become the music we play or the athletic moves we master. Our bodies humble us in their creaturely dependency, and they are our glory when they reveal our transcendence.

The ambiguities of being embodied persons have led some people over the ages to propose a deceptively simpler account of what we are. Why not be one or the other: either a mere body, a thing or a vaunted mental self freed from our humble physicality? Maybe we are just animals or even machines. On the other hand, maybe we are just minds or brains. But both options split us in half and turn one part of us against another. Both require a depersonalization of our bodies.

Such is the world of alienated

human bodies. They are things set apart from our personal being.

Concretely, we can see how this occurs in human sexuality. In its most extreme form, alienated, depersonalized sex is at the rotten core of rape—literally turning others into mere things, robbing them of their personal meaning. Sadism and masochism are mirror images of sexual alienation. Lesser forms of depersonalized sex are pornography or fetishism—sexual engagement with things—and the body as commodity, obvious in prostitution. One may also wonder whether the repression of feeling, commitment and deepest personal longings is emblematic of the casual “hooking up” culture.

More generally, the ideology of alienation from our bodies touches upon our very identity as human persons. In early 2012, the *Journal of Medical Ethics* shocked many of its readers by publishing an article asserting that newborn babies are no more persons than fetuses are. Its “medical ethicist” authors, while admitting that neonates are genetically human, hold that such humans are not subjects “of a moral right to life” because they lack the properties of persons who can view their own existence as having value. They coin the term “after-birth abortion” for the killing of such depersoned human bodies, since there is no damage to their personal interests.

Our estrangement from our very bodies, our humble origins and helpless dependency upon others is paralleled by the increasingly fashionable claim that a person can be dead even

though that person’s body is alive. A number of ethicists over the past decades have followed in the steps of philosophers like Peter Singer and Mary Ann Warren, who have argued that helpless and dependent men and women, deprived of their “higher” brain functions, are no longer members of our privileged caste of persons.

As Walter Glannon writes in *Biomedical Ethics*: “If persons are defined essentially in terms of the capacity for consciousness, then a person dies when the region of the brain that generates and sustains this capacity permanently ceases to function. Perhaps we should say there are two definitions of death; one for persons and one for human organisms.”

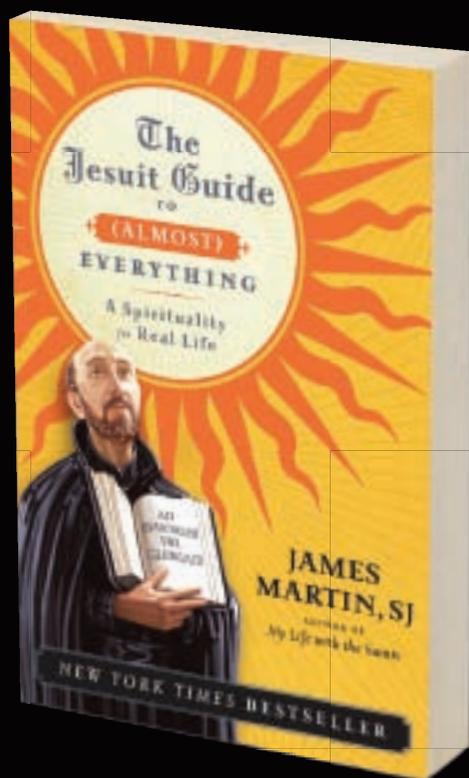
Our bodies
both
humble
us and
reveal our
transcendence.

Of course, if newborns and the mentally incapacitated are excluded, like the unborn, from the family of human persons, we may do with them anything we want. But the ultimate price will be paid not only by our wounded and vulnerable brothers and sisters.

There are terrible possibilities facing us in this new century, from endless war to economic collapse and civil disorder; but perhaps the most terrible is the most subtle. If we succumb to the temptation to divest ourselves of our bodied condition for the sake of some alienating dream of autonomous and disembodied minds, we may indeed achieve the twisted desire. But if we do, it will be at the cost of our very selves.

JOHN F. KAVANAUGH, S.J., is a professor of philosophy at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.

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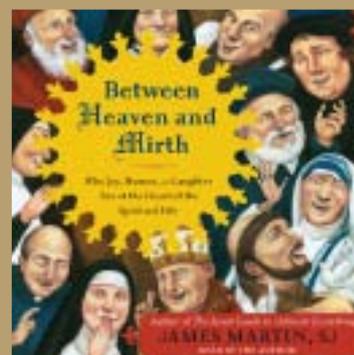
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Pope John XXIII signs the papal bull convoking the Second Vatican Council, Dec. 25, 1961.

DISCOVERING A
TRADITION AS IT CHANGED

The Convert's Tale

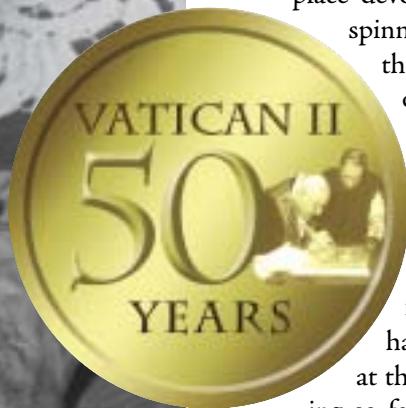
BY JOHN JAY HUGHES

Born in New York City in 1928 as the son and grandson of priests in the Episcopal Church, I grew up in a world in which deeply reverent public worship and devout personal prayer were as natural as eating or sleeping. My introduction to the Roman Catholic Church took place at age 7. My dearly loved Irish nurse, who joined our family a year after my mother died, took me one evening to her parish church for the public recitation of the rosary. A young priest was in the pulpit, bawling at the Queen of Heaven, reciting the Hail Mary at the top of his voice at breakneck speed. The congregation answered at the same tempo, with no attempt at prayer in unison. My 7-year-old soul was traumatized.

For close to 20 years that was my image of the Catholic Church: a place devoid of reverence and where worship consisted simply of spinning the prayer wheel. To this day the public recitation of the rosary sends me up the wall. I can pray the rosary myself only when driving or taking a walk.

When later I started to attend Mass in Catholic churches, I encountered the same bleak scene. Fifteen- and even 12-minute celebrations of the rite, which was considerably longer than today's ordinary form Mass, were frequent. The Mass was almost entirely silent. The few spoken parts were so garbled that they might as well have been in Mandarin. When the priest reached the prayers at the foot of the altar at the end of Mass, he was often speaking so fast that one often did not realize until well into the first prayer that he had shifted from Latin to English.

Nor was my experience unique. Here is what Avery Dulles, S.J., who



REV. JOHN JAY HUGHES is a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and author of the memoir *No Ordinary Fool: A Testimony to Grace* (Tate).

became a cardinal near the end of his long life, wrote about his conversion in *A Testimonial to Grace* (1946):

If there be anyone who contends that in order to be converted to the Catholic faith one must be first attracted by the beauty of the liturgy, he will have me to explain away. Filled as I was with a Puritan antipathy toward splendor in religious ritual, I found myself actually repulsed by the elaborate symbolism in which the Holy Sacrifice is clothed.... There was little external unity to be discerned. The priest, so far from telling the congregation when to sit or stand or kneel, carried out his tasks almost as though he were alone. The congregation, for their part, were not watching with scrupulous exactitude the movements of the celebrant. Some, on the contrary, were reciting prayers on mysterious strings of beads, which Catholics call rosaries. Others were thumbing through pages of prayer-books and missals, which, for all I knew, might have been totally unrelated to the Mass. Not even a hymn was sung to bring unity into this apparently dull and unconnected service.

Unlike Cardinal Dulles, I was never infected with Puritanism, but the pre-Vatican II celebrations of the Mass did nothing to inspire me.

From childhood I had been nourished by a liturgy that fulfilled almost all the postulates of the pre-Vatican II liturgical movement then still suspect in the English-speaking world. Later I would have the privilege of leading the celebration of that liturgy for six years as an Anglican priest. The Elizabethan language we used strikes me now as somewhat stilted, but our Eucharist was deeply reverent. There was full congregational participation. (Catholic references, pre-Vatican II, to the “dialogue Mass” amused us; we knew no other.) And there was fervent singing of hymns, which I shall miss until the day I die. On occasion I heard powerful preaching that moved me then and, in recollection, moves me still.

The Infallible Obstacle

In every Catholic church I entered, in both the United States and Britain, I found tracts with a consistent message: all other Christians are floundering in uncertainty, not knowing what to believe; we, however, have an infallible voice in Rome, who gives us the answer to every question. The reigning pontiff of that day, Pius XII, appeared only too happy to fulfill this role. If this was papal infallibility, I wanted no part of it. The claim to infallibility troubled me. I was unable to reconcile it with my reading of the Gospels. Jesus never gave people answers to every question they proposed. Instead he would enunciate a principle (“Give to God

what is God’s, to Caesar what is Caesar’s”) or tell a story (the parable of the good Samaritan, in answer to the question “Who is my neighbor?”) and send people off to work things out for themselves.

On the purely human level I experienced the Catholic Church as a closed, private club, in which nonmembers were not welcome. On an Atlantic crossing aboard the *Queen Mary*, I attended one of the many Masses celebrated daily in the first-class lounge. I made the Latin responses but did not participate in Communion. The celebrant, the bishop of a Midwestern diocese, encountered me later that day and struck up a conversation. He failed to understand my statement that I was an Anglican seminarian, for he asked whether I was “in” philosophy or theology. I explained that we did not have this division, emphasizing that I was an Anglican.

“Oh,” he responded with obvious displeasure, “but you were answering my Mass.”

“Yes,” I replied, “Our own Mass is much like yours. And I know Latin.”

“Oh,” he snorted angrily, turning immediately on his heel and walking away. I was all of 21.

During my studies at General Theological Seminary in New York, my field education involved shepherding a group of Episcopal public schoolchildren to their religious instruction weekly under the “released time” provision of state law. Waiting with me was always a young Catholic priest, who was there to gather his larger contingent of Catholic children. He invariably crossed to the other side of the street to avoid contact with a heretic. A few years later, after ordination, I experienced similar treatment from a well-known monsignor in Tucson, Ariz., who regularly refused to return a friendly greeting from me or any of the other Episcopal clergymen in town.

On an extended European trip in 1959 I discovered, to my surprise, that the Catholic Church had another face than the one I was familiar with at home. To people I met at the University of Louvain, in Belgium, I explained why I could not accept the pope as some kind of oracle who gives the answer to every question.

“But that’s not what we believe at all,” they told me.

“What then do you believe?” I asked.

They explained that papal infallibility meant simply that when, on very rare occasions, the pope spoke in his official capacity as the church’s chief teacher to define the church’s faith, he would, at the very least, not be wrong. Astonished at this idea, which was novel to me, I reacted with deep skepticism. On the one hand, it seemed something I could accept. But on the other, it seemed to me almost certain that this explanation of papal infallibility was the proposal of some small avant-garde and that it would be only a matter of time before the pope declared them out of bounds, just as

Pius XII had rejected the teachings of some of his best theologians in France in his 1950 encyclical "Humani Generis."

This conversation, and many others I had during that trip (including an audience with a Roman cardinal who spoke almost entirely about his own career) set me on an almost yearlong period of agonizing study, reflection and prayer, during which the question of the church, and my conscientious duty, was not out of my waking thoughts for two hours together. At no time was the Catholic Church, as I experienced it, other than alien and off-putting.

Looking back from the distance of more than half a century, I can see why. The church I confronted closely resembled the one whose demise is loudly deplored by the Society of St. Pius X today: barred and shuttered against the modern world, unwilling to take seriously the possibility that goodness and truth might exist outside its own clearly drawn boundaries.

The interviewer Peter Seewald invited comment on this from Cardinal Ratzinger (*Salt of the Earth*, 1997):

As a young theologian you complained at the time that the Church had "reins that are too tight, too many laws, many of which have helped to leave the century of unbelief in the lurch, instead of helping it to redemption." The cardinal replied: "...I cannot recall the individual sentences you cited, but it is correct that

I was of the opinion that scholastic theology, in the form it had come to have, was no longer an instrument for bringing faith into the contemporary discussion. It had to get out of its armor; it also had to face the situation of the present in a new language, in a new openness. So a greater freedom also had to arise in the Church."

When I finally made my decision for that church at Easter 1960, I did so with a cold heart. I found myself, as an Anglican priest, confronted by the question put to Jesus by his critics: By what authority do you do these things? (Mk 11:28). I had no answer. Once my doubts and misunderstandings about Catholic teaching had been resolved, I realized that I could not, in conscience, remain in the Anglican Church. I realized I must act on my convictions, however difficult that might be.

In reality, not all my doubts were ever fully resolved. Deep misgivings remained. To the end, I had nothing more than moral certainty. How could I be sure that the papacy, in practice, was not as Anglicans claimed: the negation of episcopacy; that the Catholic bishops were not mere papal functionaries, with the pope not only the universal but sole bishop? How could I know that the explanation of papal infallibility given me by my friends in Louvain a year previously was authentically Catholic and not the pope-as-oracle

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On none of these questions did I ever achieve complete certainty. I just had to make an act of faith, based upon reason but not provable on rational grounds alone, that my doubts had been resolved. Another convert, the late English Msgr. Ronald Knox, wrote once: "In the end the convert is faced with just one question. The Church says: 'Look into my eyes. Do you trust me?' All else is irrelevant."

The Council Opens

Fast forward now two-and-a-half years to the opening of the Second Vatican Council in October 1962. I was teaching at a German *Gymnasium*, or "higher school." With faculty colleagues I looked forward eagerly to the weekly radio reports on the council by the Swiss Jesuit Mario von Galli. With astonishment, but with mounting joy, I learned that "the church that never changes" was in fact changing. Still clearly remembered is something Father von Galli told us that, though insignificant in itself, showed that the ice was breaking up. There were council fathers, he told us, who were agitating for a new dogma about St. Joseph (of all people and things)! Pope John XXIII, in a telling move,

responded by simply inserting the name of St. Joseph into the canon of the Mass, previously considered untouchable.

At Easter 1965 I started doctoral studies at the University of Münster. Unforgettable, and no less thrilling than Father von Galli's reports, were the lectures in which the Rev. Joseph Ratzinger related the events in which he himself had just participated in Rome. The more open view of the church, held only by a small and, in the English-speaking world, deeply suspect minority at the time I made my decision in 1960, was being declared authentic. I felt like a man who has bet the ranch on a dark horse and seen him come home a winner. Those were heady days indeed.

Am I happy about everything that has happened in the church since the opening of Vatican II 50 years ago? Of course not. There has scarcely been a council, John

Henry Newman said following the First Vatican Council, without great confusion afterward. Mass as a happy-clappy celebration of human togetherness, clown Masses, desacralization taken to the extreme, pulpit messages consisting of little more than "I'm O.K., you're O.K." and much else that followed in the decades after the council's close in December 1965—all that is as deeply offensive to me as the 12-minute pre-Vatican II Masses that helped keep me out of the Catholic Church over a half-century ago.

I rejoice, however, at Vatican II's discovery that tradition reaches behind what John W. O'Malley, S.J., has aptly called "the long 19th century." Tradition extends over two millennia and is richly varied. What Vatican II called "the house of God," a term, once common, rediscovered during the council in the church's attic and brought into regular use again, is far larger and more roomy than we previously assumed. The most recent evidence of this roominess is Pope Benedict XVI's establishment of Anglican ordinariates, which allow Anglicans already one with us in faith to enter God's house, bringing with them their treasured liturgy and spirituality.

Years ago Cardinal Ratzinger told an interviewer, "The only really effective case for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely, the saints the church has produced and the art which has grown in her womb." Urgently needed today is deeply reverent, prayerful celebration of the liturgy given to us by the church. We need also to repair the devastation wrought by the musical iconoclasm of recent decades. And we need doctrinally sound preaching, inspired and permeated by Scripture, that joyfully and enthusiastically proclaims the good news of the Gospel: that God loves sinners with a love that will never let us go. These are the elements, I learned as an Anglican well over half a century ago, that constitute "the beauty of holiness, and the holiness of beauty." **A**

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Why They Left

Exit interviews shed light on empty pews.

BY WILLIAM J. BYRON AND CHARLES ZECH

It is no secret that increasing numbers of baptized Catholics in the United States never or rarely attend Sunday Mass. In the late fall of 2011, we asked some of them a simple question: Why? At the request of Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., of Trenton, N.J., we surveyed nearly 300 non-churchgoing Catholics in his diocese.

We got in touch with registered parishioners who are no longer showing up by placing articles in the secular and diocesan press, posting notices in parish bulletins and asking pastors for contact information. The survey was also offered in Spanish, sent to all the parishes with Spanish-language populations and advertised in a Spanish-language newspaper.

Through these methods, we established confidential contact with Catholics ranging in age from 16 to 90, with a mean and median age of 53. Ninety-five percent of the respondents were white/Caucasian; 2.1 percent were Hispanic; and 63 percent were female. Through Villanova University's Center for the Study of Church Management, each participant received by regular mail or e-mail a brief set of questions inviting open-ended responses. This article highlights those responses.

WILLIAM J. BYRON, S.J., is professor of business and society at Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, Pa. **CHARLES ZECH** is professor of economics and director of the Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.

Left Behind

An overwhelming number of respondents told us they had left both their parish and the church. About a quarter said they had separated themselves from the parish but still con-



sidered themselves to be Catholic. One respondent wrote: "I separated my family from the Catholic Church and turned to an alternate religion for a while and then returned knowing I had the right religion but the wrong people running it." Several chose to specify that they separated themselves from "the hierarchy."

A fair amount of ambivalence was exhibited in response to our question whether separation was a conscious decision or not. Relatively few indicated that they simply "drifted away."

One 23-year-old woman said: "I felt deceived and under-

valued by the church. I didn't understand certain things and found no mentors within the church. I just stopped going because my community of friends and family were no longer in the church." Another woman wrote, "I tried different Catholic churches in the area because I just didn't seem to be getting anything out of the Mass, especially the homily." Another person said, "I stopped going regularly because the homilies were so empty. And whenever the church wanted to raise money, they dropped the homily and talked money." There were many complaints about the quality of homilies as well as about poor music at Mass.

The scandal surrounding the sexual abuse of minors by clergy was mentioned often. One man said that what did it for him was "the bishop's refusal to list pedophile priests on the diocesan Web site and his non-support of the effort to lift the statute of limitations for bringing sexual abuses cases forward in the courts."

To Prompt a Return

We also asked, "Are there any changes your parish might make that would prompt you to return?" Respondents clearly welcomed the opportunity to express their opinions. We found no easily discernible trend in their replies, but their generally positive tone suggests the wisdom of finding ways for all Catholics to post their views somehow "on the record," with an assurance that they will be heard. Here are just a few of the many replies this question drew:

"Be accepting of divorced and remarried congregants."

"I'm looking for more spiritual guidance and a longer sermon."

"Return to a more consultative and transparent approach."

"Change the liberal-progressive political slant to a more conservative, work-ethic atmosphere."

"Make the homilies more relevant; eliminate the extreme conservative haranguing."

"Provide childcare and a children's ministry."

"Give us an outwardly loving, kind, Christian Catholic priest/pastor."

Our question about whether or not their pastor was "approachable or welcoming" drew a number of warm and positive answers. About half of the respondents, however, were not enthusiastically supportive of their pastors. Where pastors and parishes were named, we gave that information to the bishop and recommended that he deal with the issues privately and avoid unnecessary public embarrassment

when he goes public with our report. Words like "arrogant," "distant," "aloof" and "insensitive" appeared often enough to suggest that attention must be paid to evidence of "clericalism" in the diocese.

Most respondents were positive or neutral in response to our question about the approachability of parish staff. There were sufficient reports of bad experiences over the parish telephone, however, to suggest that attention should be paid to courtesy and improved "customer relations."

By a margin of about two to one, respondents reported that they did at one time consider themselves to be part of a parish community. On the negative side, here are two interesting replies elicited by this question:

"As much as I wanted to get involved and expand my faith, there were no clear

avenues to do that. So it was just a place to attend Mass. And because attending Mass was a guilt-ridden obligation, I was always alone in a crowd where I knew no one and no one knew me."

"I did not experience community in the sense that I knew people just from going to church. The ones I knew, I knew them outside of church. No one misses the fact that we stopped going. No one has called from the parish, even though we were regular attendees and envelope users!"

We asked, "Are there any religious beliefs or practices specific to the Catholic Church that trouble you? Here is a sampling of what we heard:

"Yes, the church's view on gays, same-sex marriage, women as priests and priests not marrying, to name a few."

"Pedophile priests and brothers."

"Hypocrisy, history of discrimination against women, anti-gay stance, unwelcoming attitude."

"The stance on divorce."

"Bishops covering up child abuse and transferring offending priests to other parishes."

"Yes, I cannot comprehend transubstantiation, and I cannot see why we have to confess our sins to a priest." (Many others mentioned confession.)

"Clerical privilege."

"I think the church should focus its efforts on poverty, war and healthcare."

"It's all about money; that's why we left" (from a married couple, age 44).

"The primary reason why I left the church is that divorced and remarried persons are not welcome; they are viewed as adulterous sinners."

It is time to offer more reasoned arguments and better pastoral explanations of points of Catholic doctrine that trouble people.

“Overemphasis on abortion.” (This was mentioned by many, who think abortion is wrong but overemphasized to the exclusion of other social concerns.)

“I feel the church should stay out of politics; it should certainly not threaten politicians.”

“The Catholic Church as a whole is ritualistic and cold. I do not get the sense of family and community that I get from another faith community. I get the feeling that God is judgmental and harsh, unforgiving and unyielding.”

“I am troubled by what appears to be the Catholic Church’s seemingly insatiable demand for money. You can attend Mass every week, but if you are not putting money in your envelope, you can lose your ‘in parish’ status and even your ability to receive letters that are needed to be godparents, etc.”

“It’s all about the priests. The leadership of the church does not seem to understand that we do not care about priests. They live an upper-middle-class lifestyle and are completely disconnected from reality. And yet they think they can preach to us. End the clericalism and people like me may listen to the church again.” (Others mentioned priestly “pomposity,” “distance,” “aloofness.”)

It should be noted that most respondents said no to our question about any “bad experiences” they may have had with any person officially associated with the church. Mention was made, however, of bad experiences in the confessional; refusals by parish staff to permit eulogies at funerals; denial of the privilege of being a godparent at a relative’s baptism; verbal, emotional and physical abuse in Catholic elementary school; denial of permission for a religiously mixed marriage in the parish church. In one case the parish priest “refused to go to the cemetery to bury my 9-year-old son because it was not a Catholic cemetery.” Several respondents noted that they were victims of sexual abuse by clergy.

In the course of replying to this question about “bad experiences,” a 78-year-old man said something that could serve as a guideline for the bishop in reacting to this survey. This man wrote, “Ask a question of any priest and you get a rule; you don’t get a ‘let’s sit down and talk about it’ response.” It is our hope that there will be more sitting down and talking things over in the Diocese of Trenton, and perhaps in other dioceses, as a result of this survey experience.

The Bishop’s Ear

We asked, “If you could communicate directly with the bishop, what would you like to say?” This drew a few barbs but a great deal of very helpful commentary as well. The responses may prompt the bishop to find a forum for direct one-on-one future communication between parishioners and himself. Here is a very brief sampling of what people would like to tell their bishop:



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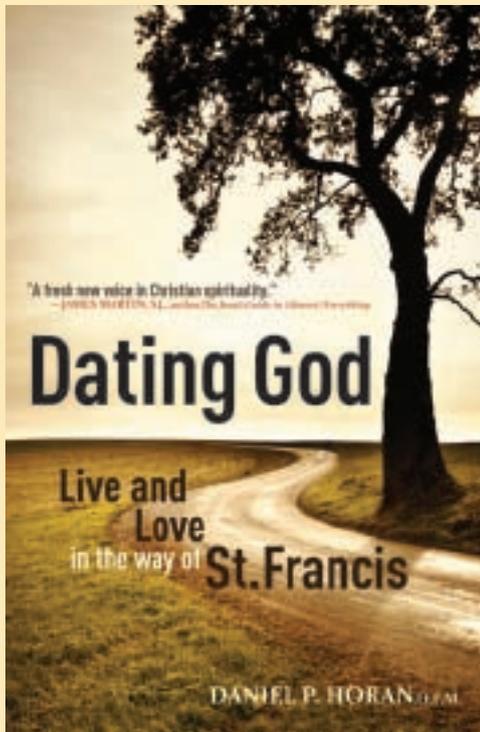


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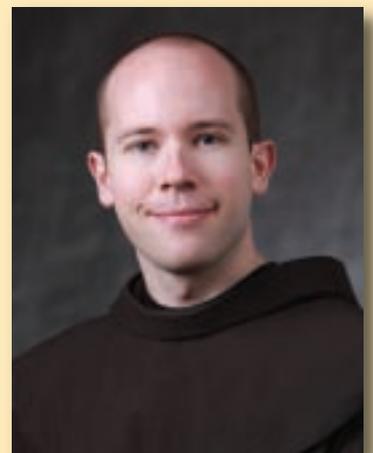
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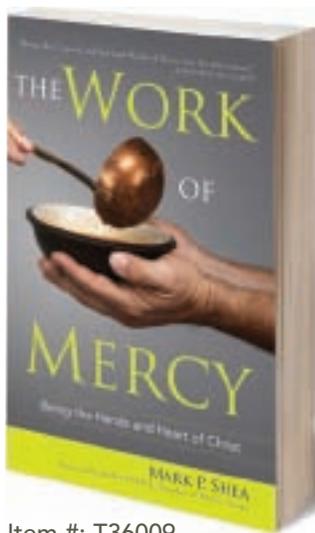
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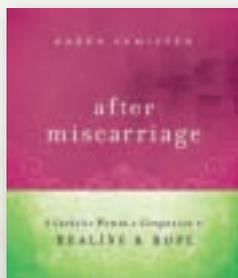
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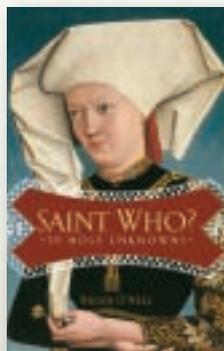


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“The church should not condemn gays, but embrace them as God’s people. The church should also recognize women as equals.”

“Please find a way not to exclude me from the Catholic community” (divorced woman, 56).

“Remember that the church is not just the religious leaders but the people who sit in the pews each week. Ask more questions; listen to them, and involve them in decision-making.”

“Petition the church to expand its view on divorce” (divorced and remarried woman, 59).

“Young mothers like me need help. Have women, as well as men, as greeters at Mass; make childcare available; encourage the formation of mothers’ groups; have the homilies speak to me” (married white woman, 29, now attending a Baptist church).

“Do something about confession; have communal penance services.”

“If the Catholic Church does not change its archaic views on women, it is going to become a religion that survives on the fringe of an open-minded, progressive society.”

“Instead of making every Mass a form of humiliation for Catholics who cannot receive Communion, do something, like a private blessing at Communion time, to include everyone” (divorced and remarried woman, 64).

“I would advise the bishop to make training in public speaking mandatory for every priest. They should also be trained in how to relate their homilies to the people and inspire them.”

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“You have my sympathies, Bishop; I couldn’t imagine stepping into a management situation with such glaring human resources weaknesses. Perhaps you should have your priests live together in regional centers so that they could be psychologically healthier as a result of more human interaction. Also, do something about the quality of Catholic education.”

Our survey instrument gave respondents an opportunity to “break anonymity,” if they wished, and give their contact information so that someone from the diocese could be in touch with them if they would like that to happen. To his credit, Bishop O’Connell has indicated that he personally will respond to the 25 persons who indicated that they would like to be contacted.

The vast majority of respondents said no to our question about whether they considered themselves now to be members of another faith community. Those who do consider themselves affiliated with another church spanned a wide range, including Buddhist and Jewish, on the fringe, and Lutheran, Episcopal, Baptist and Presbyterian, clustered in the middle.

The Take-Away

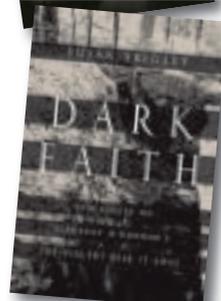
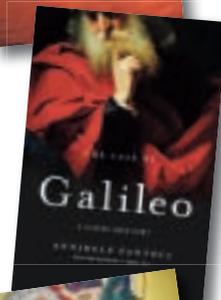
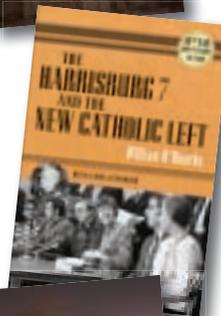
There is much to be learned from all this. Considering that these responses come, by definition, from a disaffected group, it is noteworthy that their tone is overwhelmingly positive and that the respondents appreciated the opportunity to express themselves. Some of their recommendations will surely have a positive impact on diocesan life. Not surprisingly, the church's refusal to ordain women, to allow priests to marry, to recognize same-sex marriage and to admit divorced and remarried persons to reception of the Eucharist surfaced, as did contraception and a host of questions associated with the scandal of sexual abuse by members of the clergy

Throughout our involvement with this project, we thought of the "negotiable" and "non-negotiable" issues that would be raised. All the concerns expressed will, we hope, be received with pastoral understanding. Diocesan officials are taking notice of topics that call for better explanation. As they do, we hope that they will bear in mind the comment cited by one man, who said that "every time you ask a question, you get a rule." It is not necessary to repeat the rules; it is time to offer more reasoned arguments and better pastoral explanations of points of Catholic doctrine and practice that appear to be troubling to people in the diocese. Notable among these are the exclusion of women from ordination, the perception that persons of homosexual orientation are unwelcome in the church, the complexity of the annulment process and the barring of divorced and remarried persons from the sacraments.

In need of immediate attention is a fresh explanation of the nature of the Eucharist. Underlying all the opinions expressed by the respondents to this survey is the fact that they are, for the most part, willing to separate themselves from the celebration and reception of the Eucharist. This calls for a creative liturgical, pastoral, doctrinal and practical response. An explanation of the "Sunday obligation" as an obligation to give thanks—through sacrament and sacrifice—rather than simply to be present in church at Mass on Sunday might be helpful.

The quality of preaching needs attention, as does the image of clergy who—fairly or unfairly—are all too often seen as arrogant, distant, unavailable and uncaring. Not unrelated to the homily issue is the quality of the sound systems in churches and the difficulty congregations have understanding foreign-born clergy, often with heavy accents.

We have included only a sampling of responses in this article, but we have given Bishop O'Connell our full report and recommendations. He also has what we call a "data dump"—the complete set of all the questionnaires—which will take him on an unedited excursion through the minds of those whose bodies are no longer occupying space in the pews on Sundays. **A**



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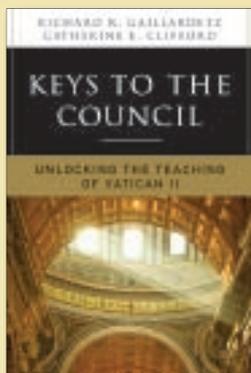
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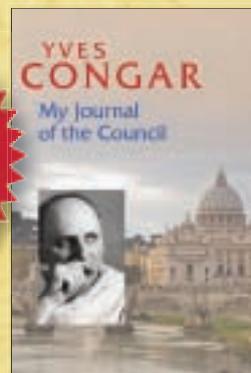
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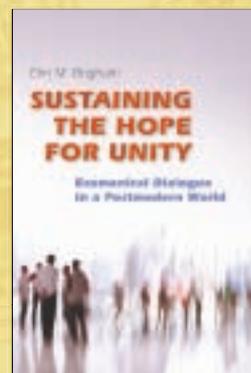
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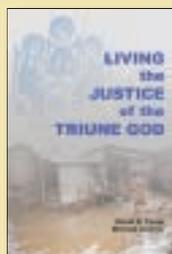
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FAITH IN FLUX

NIGHT OF THE CONFESSOR Christian Faith in an Age of Uncertainty

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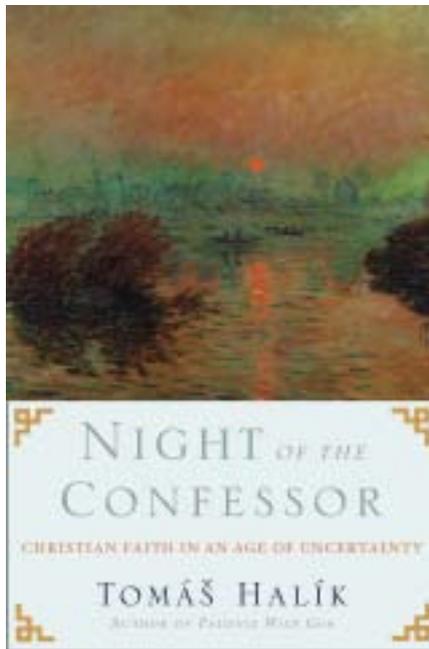
Night of the Confessor cannot be fully appreciated without knowing something of Tomas Halik's personal background. Though not yet a household theological name in the United States, in his native country, the Czech Republic and in Europe, however, Halik is a much-celebrated writer and a public intellectual. Born in Prague in 1948, Halik was first trained in sociology, philosophy and clinical psychology at Charles University, in Prague, and later in theology.

During the Communist period, he was banned from university teaching and was persecuted by the police as "an enemy of the regime." In 1978 he was secretly ordained a priest in Germany and then returned to his own country. Currently he holds a professorship in sociology at Charles University and continues to be active in pastoral ministry. Halik was also involved in Czech politics, serving as advisor to President Václav Havel, who made it publicly known that Halik was qualified to be his successor.

The book is born of Halik's manifold competencies and experiences, but primarily of his weekly work hearing confessions. Hence *Confessor* in the title. Night serves as a metaphor for the darkness, or as the subtitle puts it, the "uncertainty" of our age. The "signs of the times" that prompt this bleak assessment, in Halik's view, are not those widely lamented by both conser-

vatives and liberals. Contrary to the former's romantic nostalgia for an imagined glorious past and the latter's naïve optimism about an illusory future, Halik urges that our thinking be rooted in the "core of Christianity," that is, the "enigmatic Easter story—that great paradox of victory through defeat."

Christianity, for Halik, is founded



on two paradoxical affirmations: Jesus' assurance that "for human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26) and Paul's confession that "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10). In the footsteps of "theologians of paradox," Halik proposes a "theology and spirituality of paradox" based on the "Easter paradox."

In this paradoxical vein Halik suggests that we pray not for the "great faith"—more precisely, credulity—of fundamentalist and fanatic easy cer-

tainities but for the "little faith" the size of a mustard seed that is tempered in the fire of inner doubts and crises. In light of this "little faith," the kingdom of God that is ushered in by Jesus should be understood as "the kingdom of the Impossible," the kingdom of "unselfishness, nonviolence, and generous love." In Halik's "logic of paradox," God is not so much present as absent: God's existence cannot be rationally proved but only "intimated." Believers will be "allowed to feel the absent God of those who do not pray, in order that the latter may catch an intimation of the God who is present."

Having come to faith slowly through a process of doubt, Halik confesses to a deep uneasiness with religious enthusiasm of left and right, which he characterizes as "religious clownery." For him, matters of faith are not self-evident; an atheistic interpretation of the world is as logically possible as a theistic one. In place of superficial religious enthusiasm, Halik recommends a "discreet faith," with "a touch of skepticism, irony, and commitment to critical reason as a permanent corrective." This kind of faith is particularly necessary, Halik argues, in dialogue with scientists, in which Christians are severely tempted to prove the act of divine creation on biblical grounds. Citing Augustine's "si comprehendis, non est Deus" ("If you comprehend god, that god is not God"), Halik reminds us that a scientifically proven God is nothing but an idol and unworthy of our belief.

While Halik's sober reflections on the possibility of faith in the "age of uncertainty" are all thought-provoking for U.S. readers, the most interesting chapters are those containing his assessment of the Czech Catholic Church and his critique of contempo-



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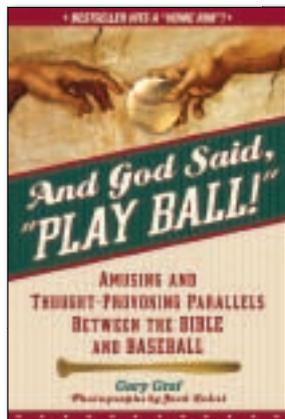
rary media in the United States and post-9/11 addiction to violence. There are, of course, vast differences between the Czech Catholic Church and the Catholic Church in the United States that require extreme caution when comparing them. Halik's warnings about the irreversible decline of the church as a public "religion" and the urgent need for a deep spirituality for church renewal are highly relevant.

Halik directs his most fiery attacks at the so-called reality shows, which in his eyes as a confessor represent a kind of totalitarianism and pervert the very meaning of the sacrament of reconciliation. No less acerbic is his condemnation of violence, especially when depicted for religious causes, as in Mel Gibson's film about the Passion, which, ironically, conservative church leaders enthusiastically endorsed as an evangelistic opportunity for conversion but which is in fact "a regression to the orgiastic goings-on in the Roman arena or a reversion to a world of blood sacrifice," glorifying violence as a means to redemption.

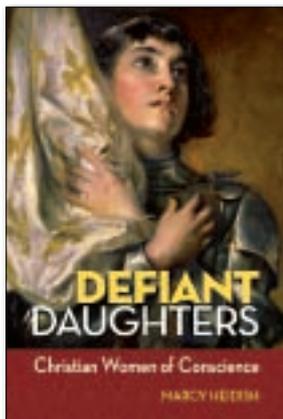
Other themes dealt with in Halik's book include dialogue with non-Christian, especially Asian, religions. Halik's openness toward the religious other is sincere and edifying. But I find his treatment of this theme disappointing. Halik recounts the story of a Czech young man who had rediscovered Christianity, grown disillusioned with it, joined Buddhism and then returned to Christianity. His use of the parable of the prodigal son to refer to those who have left Christianity for other faiths and now return is hardly illuminating of their spiritual condition.

Though he urges us to study the phenomenon of "multiple religious identity" "carefully, soberly, and without bias," he has not delved deeply into it as a theological phenomenon but rather restricts himself to considering their "return," "albeit *now different*, changed, transformed, and capable of

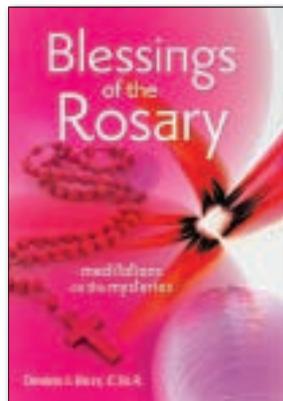
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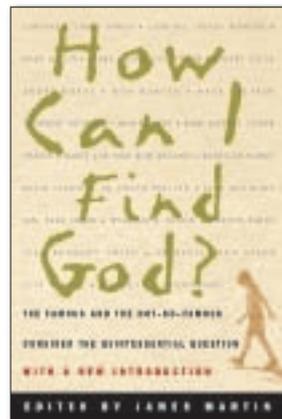
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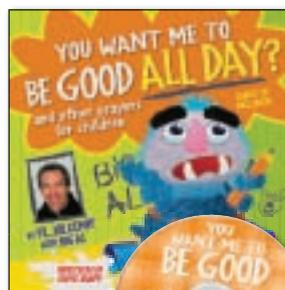
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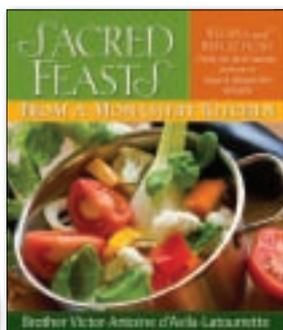


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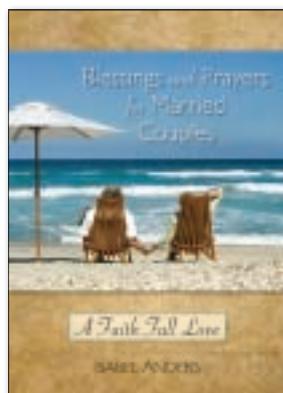


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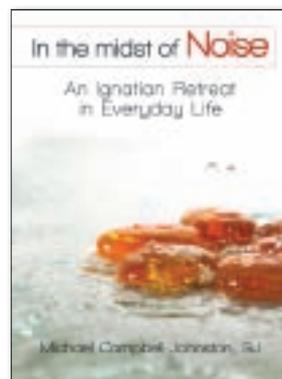
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seeing differently and more fully.” But what if “our homegrown Buddhists” never come back to Christianity; what if instead, like Paul Knitter, they go forward and become bona fide Buddhists, while never ceasing to be Christians? Is this multiple religious belonging not an ideal and even a necessity for the well-being of religions and the world today?

Night of the Confessor should not be read at one sitting from beginning to end. In fact, the chapters can be perused in any order, several times, slowly, meditatively. And the book, of

course, should not be restricted to “confessors.” No doubt Halik’s “second-wind Christianity” will appear too postmodern and unorthodox to conservatives. Liberals will find his vision of the church too ethereal to forge effective church reforms.

Whatever the case, his book will provoke an urgent conversation about what it means to be a Christian today, in

our “age of uncertainty.”

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THOMAS DEPIETRO

EVERYDAY MYSTERIES

THE ANGEL ESMERALDA

Nine Stories

By Don DeLillo
Scribner. 224p \$24

Catholic writers of fiction follow no single path, nor do they adhere to a uniform aesthetic. Some bring to light the often closed world of the clergy. Others dramatize a distinct moral or spiritual dilemma. But most simply dwell in the cultural world of growing up Catholic.

The extraordinary writer Don DeLillo falls into none of these categories; his 15 novels have little in common with a J. F. Powers or a Flannery O’Connor. This would not be surprising but for one fact: DeLillo’s extensive Catholic education. It is possible, as he joked in one interview, that he “slept” through his years at Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx. It is far less likely that he skated through his next four years at Fordham, the Jesuit university just a few blocks from his home.

I have reviewed, interviewed and

edited a book about DeLillo, but I have never given much thought to the religious dimension of his dazzling oeuvre. But the new collection of his short stories, *The Angel Esmeralda*, with its overtly religious title story and cover photograph, made me wonder: what exactly was DeLillo’s Catholic education at Fordham in 1954, when he first matriculated? Specifically, I was interested in the theological curriculum, so I called the archivist at Fordham. According to the school catalogue, theology “gives unity and integration to the entire Fordham program.” I found that even a student in communication arts (DeLillo’s self-mocked major) was required to study theology and philosophy (as in scholastic philosophy) in all eight of his terms, not

to mention the requirement to attend to the “customary religious duties.”

The titles of the mandatory courses DeLillo must have taken are anathema to someone like me who attended Jesuit school a few generations later: “The Quadriform Gospel,” “The Priesthood of Christ,” “The Mystical Body of Christ,” and—*nota bene*—“Alpha and Omega.” Note it well for the obvious reason. DeLillo’s last novel, *Point Omega*, contemplates a number of mysteries at the center of life and also takes inspiration from the legendary Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who conceptualized the idea of an “omega point.” This may be the only explicit mention of a Jesuit in DeLillo’s work, but I think Ignatian spirituality permeates much of his thinking, which is on full display in this collection of nine stories, which span most of his career as a novelist.

As such, these varied fictions provide a perfect introduction for new readers. The contours of his evolving stylistic concerns emerge in short form, and we see how each subject finds its pitch-perfect expression, with DeLillo’s truly incarnational sense of each and every word. True, all of the themes his loyal fans expect are also here: the dread embodied in a child’s random abduction (“The Runner”), the sense of doom experienced by a jailed financial crook as he listens to a litany of crisis and chaos on TV (“Hammer and Sickle”) and a pure cinematic moment of a sexual encounter on a remote tropical island (“Creation”). The brilliant “Human Moments in World War III” more fully imagines the very notion of creation than the story that precedes it, about two astronauts orbiting the

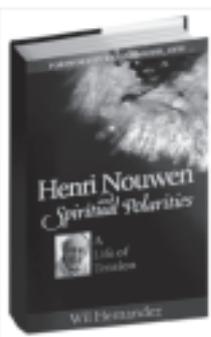


planet and discovering transcendence in ordinary things, as they ponder "The Lord of Creation."

Later stories introduce a number of intriguing hints and suggestions of DeLillo's Christian spirituality. A meditation on Gerhard Richter's paintings of dead radicals ("Baader-Meinhof") includes a cross in the distorted image, a symbol of forgiveness, in the narrator's view. "Midnight in Dostoevsky" (from a poem by Frank O'Hara) follows two students, both believers in God, as they imagine "the souls" of those in their desolate upstate college town. "The Starveling," the most recent piece, returns us to one of DeLillo's perennial situations: a man alone in a room. (Of his own life, DeLillo once said, "The Jesuits taught me to be a failed ascetic.") The "saintly" moviegoer of the story, a man with no real life of his own, seeks fellow "souls" in the dark and demonstrates a "monkish dedication" in his pursuit of cinematic otherworldiness.

The centerpiece of this collection, though, is the title story, which DeLillo partly incorporated into his magisterial *Underworld* (1997). Like the breathtaking prologue to that massive fiction ("Pafko at the Wall"), "The Angel Esmeralda" stands boldly on its own. Frankly, it is hard to imagine any Catholic reader who would not be mesmerized by DeLillo's tale of two nuns set in the "found surrealism" of the South Bronx during the 1970s, at its worst. Sister Edgar, "a figure from the universal church," does God's work among the poor and desolate, aided by the young, out-of-habit, Sister Grace. But this is not merely a study in pre- and post-Vatican II sensibilities; it is a testament to "the power of transcendence." After the brutal murder of a young wild-child in their bombed-out neighborhood, the two nuns draw close. Sister Edgar, on the one hand, is decidedly old-school, talking the language of damnation and the Baltimore Catechism. Sister Grace, on the other

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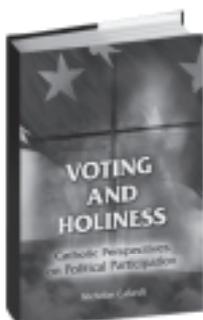
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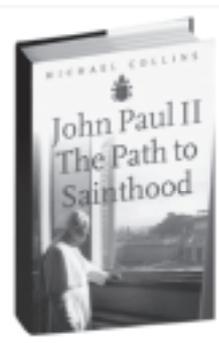
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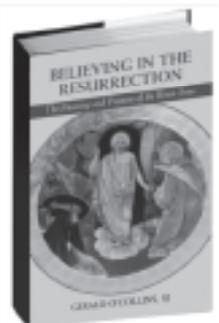
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hand, speaks the lingo of social justice. What unites them in faith is a singular sight: the transfiguration of the dead little girl. Her image appears on a billboard when light from the el train hits it just so, an image that has brought many religious seekers to the spot. The grace manifest in the vision comforts the old nun as she prays at story's end, seeking solace from her bodily aches and pains.

Whatever DeLillo's personal practices and beliefs—I do not pretend to any special knowledge—this story

should make clear his appeal to Catholic readers. And if I have not convinced you of his religious sensibility, so be it. When all is said and done, this former Catholic schoolboy deserves the attention of anyone who values great fiction. He is a master of the art.

THOMAS DEPIETRO is editor of *Conversations With Kingsley Amis*. A former contributing editor of the journal *Kirkus Reviews*, he has written articles and reviews for a wide range of publications.

TOM CURRAN

INTEGRATING HOLY CROSS

FRATERNITY

By Diane Brady
Spiegel & Grau. 242p \$25

At the end of the 1960s, a Jesuit priest trained in theology decided the time was ripe for the College of the Holy Cross to embrace the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and social change. Propelled by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., John Brooks, S.J., took it on himself to integrate what for years had been a shining example of a launching pad for the Irish Catholic aristocracy.

Brooks, backed by the president of Holy Cross, Raymond Swords, S.J., drove to Philadelphia to recruit as many passionate, smart African-American high school seniors as he could afford. The collection of 20 men he helped bring to Worcester, Mass., in the summer of 1968 was remarkable. *Fraternity*, a book by Diane Brady of Bloomberg BusinessWeek, tells the stories of five of them.

Two of them, Clarence Thomas, now a U.S. Supreme Court justice, and Ted Wells, a federal defense attorney from New Jersey who represents high-level government officials accused of

wrongdoing, have made their mark in American law. Ed Jenkins played for the Miami Dolphins in their undefeated 1972 season. Ed Jones won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2004 for his novel *The Known World*, and Stanley Grayson served as a deputy mayor of New York City before becoming president of M. R. Beal & Co., one of the nation's largest minority-owned investment banks.

Brooks did not act alone in changing the face of Holy Cross. Wells, for example, was an outstanding Washington, D.C., center recruited by the football coach. Wells had already made a commitment to Pittsburgh, but a call from Edward Bennett Williams, then a part owner of the Washington Redskins as well as a nationally known lawyer and Holy Cross alumnus, helped change his mind.

Grayson, from Detroit, was recruited as a basketball player. And a tour of

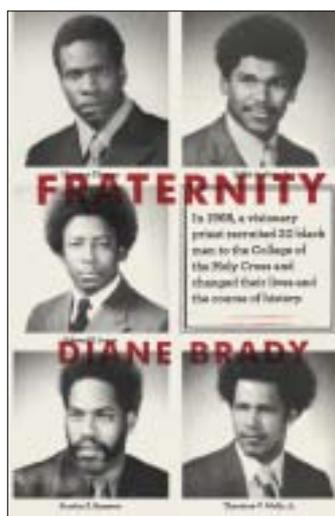
the campus with Art Martin, one of eight black students at Holy Cross at the time, helped convince him that he could thrive there.

For readers unfamiliar with Thomas' memoirs, *My Grandfather's Son* (Harper Collins, 2007), *Fraternity* does a good job of tracing his path from high school in a Roman Catholic seminary to graduation as ninth in his class at Holy Cross. He was instrumental in forming the Black Students Union, developed to present the students' perspective to the college administration. Among other extracurricular activities, Thomas wrote for the student paper, *The Crusader*.

Most of the book is devoted to Brooks's mentoring of the African-American students and examining the role the Black Students Union played in campus life. The focal point came in December 1969. Antiwar fever ran high, especially on college campuses, where the student deferment for the Vietnam draft had been replaced by the first selective service lottery system. Around the country, recruiters from companies tied to the war effort were subjected to protests. Holy Cross was no exception.

A group of about 50 students, most of them members of the Revolutionary Students Union, locked arms to block any meeting with the career counselors. The dean of students was livid. His staff identified 16 of the students involved, four of them black. There were only five blacks at the protest. At a meeting of the College Judicial

Board, Wells spoke for the black students, pointing out the racism of the decision to charge 80 percent of the blacks at the protest, because they



were easily identifiable, while letting 80 percent of the whites walk away. The board ordered the 16 students expelled.

The black students determined that to make their point, they would have to leave Holy Cross. But the administration was determined that the college had invested too much energy in its drive for integration to let it fall apart. By the time the Christmas break ended, the administration had found a way out.

Brady does a good job describing this conflict and other hurdles the college and students faced during a

tumultuous time in American history. If there is a weakness in the narrative, it is the lack of voices. We never hear, for example, what white students at Holy Cross thought about Brooks's crusade. Though the author thanks all the participants for their cooperation with her research, *Fraternity* is woefully lacking in direct quotations. Brady tells us what it was like to be among the black students at Holy Cross at the end of the 1960s, but she doesn't show us.

TOM CURRAN is associate editor of *The Star-Ledger* in Newark, N.J.

PETER REICHARD

THE DADDY DEFICIT

COMING APART

The State of White America, 1960-2010

By Charles Murray
Crown Forum. 407p \$27

As I hunched over Charles Murray's latest book, my three-year-old son Augusto pulled a book off his shelf, plopped it on top of Murray's and said, "Read to me, Papa." There was Janet Frank's *Daddies*, a children's book first published in 1953. Turning the pages, I realized it captured an America that Murray describes in *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*. It is an America that Murray says scarcely exists today.

Daddies begins by posing the question, "What do daddies do all day? Daddies work while children play." The book runs through a series of color illustrations of fathers at jobs that are overwhelmingly working class. Farmers, factory workers, builders and bakers all toil away in noble work scenes. At the end, daddy rushes home and sits contentedly at dinner with his wife and three children. He may have been straining over a jackhammer all

day, but his family life makes the exertion worthwhile.

A new *Daddies*, based on what Murray describes, would begin like this: "What do daddies do all day? White upper-middle-class daddies work while white lower-class daddies play." Along with a few hard-working daddies in shirtsleeves, the drawings might depict a saggy-pants-wearing lower-class dad sauntering down the street playing a portable video game while his girlfriend staggers 10 paces ahead holding groceries and a toddler. Another scene might have him smoking weed on the couch at 10 a.m. And at the end of the day, Mommy might be sitting in front of the TV eating a bowl of cereal while the kids run the streets. Daddy is nowhere to be found, and perhaps never to be seen again.

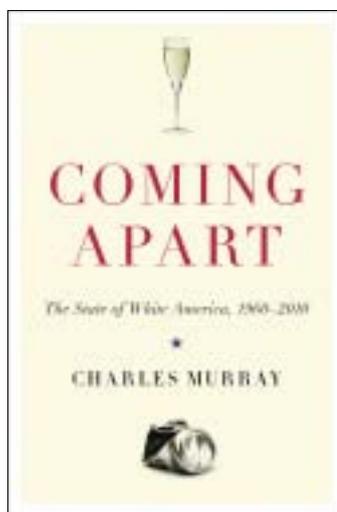
At the moment, Charles Murray is

America's official prophet of doom. In *Coming Apart*, he tells us that at least two distinct nations are forming. One can be found in the advanced degree-holding, organic-food-munching—but also churchgoing, hard-working, family-oriented, community-friendly—upper middle class. The other can be found among the increasingly miserable lower classes, in which single motherhood is the norm, working-age men are often ne'er-do-wells, church attendance is declining, and community participation is weak. Murray, an agnostic, is not concerned for moralistic reasons. He is concerned about the resulting social pathologies and dim prospects for lower-class offspring. The pillars of civilization, which he notes also happen to be the pillars of human happiness, are eroding.

Meanwhile, an incestuous new elite at the tippy-top is concentrating in a few zip codes in places like Boston, Washington D.C., New York and San Francisco. Because its members have become so isolated, the elite is oblivious to real American life. It has abdicated its "responsibility to set and promulgate standards," subscribing instead

to a nonjudgmentalism that extends to everyone but those with "differing political views, fundamentalist Christians, and rural working-class whites." Even if this elite wanted to exert influence, however, this would be difficult because its members' own unseemly behavior has eroded its standing. Think Goldman Sachs.

To Murray, the assassination of John F. Kennedy marked a turning point. That November day, the United States of shared values and narrow class differences began a steady decline. It is being replaced by a caste system. Large num-



bers of the lower class have forgotten how to live stable, family-oriented lives. And because industriousness has declined, the problem is not one that can be solved by more jobs, higher wages or more government money—at least not in Murray’s libertarian mind.

As does many a prophet, Murray enrages his critics. The co-author of 1994’s most notorious book, *The Bell Curve*, remains unflinching (though courtly) in his politically incorrect pronouncements as to I.Q., education, class and behavior. In this case, he plays it a bit safer by focusing mainly on whites.

But toward the end of the book he adds lower-class African-Americans and Latinos to his measures of lower-class family stability, industriousness, honesty and religiosity. And guess what? It does not make much of a difference in the numbers. It turns out that class, not race, is what matters.

Of course, Murray cannot resist distilling his points in a libertarian barrel. Government, he argues, has fostered both single motherhood and deadbeat fatherhood. Government is not part of the solution. Rather, with less government intervention, lower-class people would again be forced to enjoy the challenges of taking responsibility for their lives. They would be enlivened by the pressure to perform. He says this shift in the welfare state must be accompanied by a cultural shift, led by the elite, in which hard work and two-parent families are once again celebrated, while irresponsibility is stigmatized. The rest depends on the people themselves. Assuming these are the correct prescriptions, however, there is not much comfort one can take in them.

It should be noted that Murray undermines the data-driven portions of his analysis with the occasional sweeping generalization. He discusses the European character, for example, as though there were no difference between Germans and Greeks.

Furthermore, while we hear much about the lower class and the upper middle class, the book is mute on everybody in between, which hangs a big question mark over its pages.

Murray clearly loves the America of the founders, of Alexis de Tocqueville’s age—and of his own childhood, when Janet Frank wrote *Daddies*. Out of his

devotion, he offers a deeply dispiriting, numbers-driven jeremiad. But it is one that may inspire readers to take greater ownership of this nation’s future and, in some cases, to take a closer look at themselves.

PETER REICHARD is a writer and public policy researcher who lives in New Orleans, La.

BILL WILLIAMS

PROFILES IN COURAGE

BEAUTIFUL SOULS: Saying No, Breaking Ranks, and Heeding the Voice of Conscience in Dark Times

By Eyal Press

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 196 p \$24

Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi and Mother Teresa are widely admired for their heroic, history-changing deeds. Less well known are the countless ordinary people who take morally courageous stands under difficult circumstances and at great personal risk.

Eyal Press tells the stories of four of these individuals in his compelling new book, *Beautiful Souls*, which examines “the mystery of what impels people to do something risky and transgressive” when confronted with injustice.

We meet Paul Grüninger, a Swiss police commander who saved the lives of hundreds of Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. Next is Aleksander Jevtic, a Serb who saved Croats from torture and death by giving them false Serbian names. The third resister is Avner Wishnitzer, an Israeli soldier who refused to serve in the occupied territories in protest

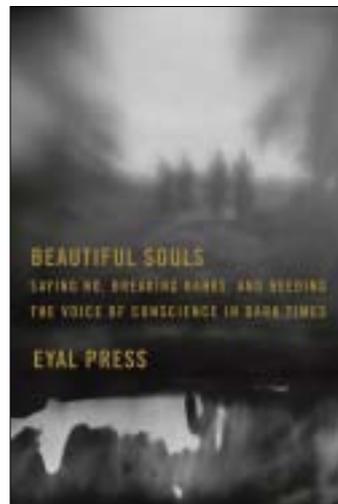
against Israel’s mistreatment of Palestinians. Finally, Leyla Wydler was a broker who tried to alert authorities to suspicious activities at her Texas-based brokerage.

The author skillfully blends history, sociology and science into a multilayered narrative that examines the factors that cause people to take principled stands. If the book has a fault, it is that Press says almost nothing about the influence of religion on ethical behavior.

In 1938 Grüninger was ordered to turn back terrified Jews fleeing from Austria to Switzerland; but he was so moved by “the screaming and crying of mothers and children,” that he felt compelled to disobey his orders. He cited his unshakable conviction that Switzerland was an enlightened nation that traditionally welcomed victims of per-

secution. He was fired for falsifying records to allow Jews to cross the border.

Grüninger was not a crusader but an ordinary man who was merely doing his “human duty,” he explained. Years after Grüninger died, a Swiss court exonerated him,



and he posthumously came to be regarded as a hero.

When Serb soldiers captured a Croatian city in 1991, they rounded up several hundred men and transported them to a prison camp. Because one of the prisoners, Aleksander Jevtic, was recognized as a Serb, he was asked to help identify other Serbs so they could be separated from the Croats, who would then be subject to severe punishment. One by one, Jevtic started giving the Croatian men Serbian names to save them.

Press was puzzled because Jevtic had “no trace of outward idealism.” Jevtic told the author that he had simply acted on instinct after observing wounded and beaten prisoners.

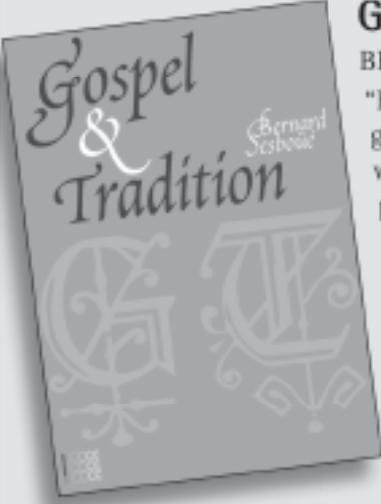
Avner Wishnitzer was an idealistic Israeli soldier who did not want to believe that his comrades would mistreat Palestinians. When he finally realized what was happening to the Palestinians, he signed a petition saying he could not take part in “missions of oppression.”

In the final profile, Leyla Wydler questioned her superiors after she was asked to sell certificates of deposit that promised returns that seemed too good to be true. In response, Wydler was fired. Her anonymous letters to federal officials were initially ignored. Recently her former employer, Stanford Group, was in the news when a federal jury convicted the firm’s chief executive of running a \$7 billion Ponzi scheme—confirmation that her suspicions had been justified.

Press displays the admirable traits of an assiduous reporter—curiosity, skepticism and persistence. Citing studies, historical precedent, modern research and a range of sages, he demonstrates the complexity of human behavior when, in the words of the book’s subtitle, people attempt to heed “the voice of conscience in dark times.”

As Press makes clear, the four people he profiles were not rebels; they

“Theologians across geographic and ecclesial boundaries will benefit mightily from this work.”*



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were rather individuals who embraced their society's moral code even as many others elected to simply follow orders.

Grüninger honored the Swiss tradition of welcoming strangers. Jevtic accepted a "spirit of tolerance" passed along to him by his mother. Wishnitzer believed that the Israeli Army was "the most moral army in the world," which in his mind precluded oppression of Palestinians. And Wydler thought it was her duty to

exercise the "due diligence" expected of all brokers.

Rarely, Press asserts in a final note, do the rest of us "bother to ask what role our own passivity and acquiescence may play in enabling unconscionable things to be done in our name."

BILL WILLIAMS, a member of the National Book Critics Circle, is a freelance writer in West Hartford, Conn., and a former editorial writer for The Hartford Courant.

IDEAS | ELIZABETH KIRKLAND CAHILL

THE LIBRARY OF MEMORY

Confessions of a book lover

It took a full year after we moved house, but finally last summer I tackled the bookshelves in our sun room. This was no small task. The bookshelves rise up 13 feet to the ceiling in this old house. There are lots of shelves and lots of books, too.

When my husband started unpacking the boxes, he placed the books on the shelves randomly. Their arrangement was not a matter of urgency, since the volumes housed in this room comprised our "backlist"—coffee-table books, assorted fiction and general nonfiction, Shakespeare, the extensive Southern collection. High-demand books were kept in my office or in the family room. I knew I would eventually get around to dealing with this particular roomful; I just didn't know it would take 12 months.

But on a quiet Sunday afternoon not long ago, I set about my task. What a jumble I faced: genres, authors, formats commingling promiscuously. It almost set my teeth on edge. On a top shelf David Grossman's *See Under: Love* sat next to H. H. Scullard's classic work, *From the Gracchi to Nero*. In the next bay *The Stories of Edith Wharton* abutted *Race*, by Studs Terkel. Slight pamphlets

were squeezed between massive hardcovers. As I took in the extent of the disarray, I felt dismay and determination vying for ascendancy.

Determination won. A few days later, with piles of books on tables, countertops and the floor, I wondered why I had waited so long to undertake such satisfying work. First, there was the sheer tactile pleasure of handling the books, perhaps underappreciated in the Age of Kindle. They were solid and substantial. They felt at home in my hands. Those of earlier vintages exuded that distinct and lovely old-book smell.

Personal History

Many of the books were markers of my personal history. I came across my paternal great-grandmother's name scrawled genteelly in a copy of *Some Famous Paintings and Their Homes*, compiled by Mary Graham Duff and given to "Mar" for Christmas in 1889, when she was 11 years old, and eight decades later to me at the same age. I opened to the title page of *Shallow Graves*, a reflection on women's experiences during the Vietnam War, and saw an inscription from one of the authors, Wendy Larsen, who (I sud-

denly recalled) sent the book as thanks for my assistance when I helped her, a stranger, after a bicycle accident in New York City's Central Park.

A copy of the Penguin Classics edition of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* bore inside it the stern admonition, "Return to Lola Szladits." Lola, the redoubtable curator of the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library when I worked there, had lent the book to me with her highest recommendation. (I hope my long-ago participation in the organization of her memorial service will compensate for my failure to return the book.) To sort, peruse and replace these books was to browse in the library of memory.

As I made my solitary way through the shelves, I slowly began to see the emergence of order, much as the shape of a sculpture emerges from a block of stone. After hours creating stacks of books and puzzling over what to put where, I was satisfied. Contemporary British fiction now had a shelf (or two) of its own, as did its American counterpart. Muriel Sparks's *Memento Mori* rested next to Joseph O'Neill's excellent *Netherland*; Walker Percy's fiction stretched out next to his friend Shelby Foote's Civil War novel *September September*. The oversize books that anchor the bottom shelves were now arranged by subject. All the Southern books—Civil War tomes, the history and architecture of Charleston, and works by such luminaries as James MacPherson, W. J. Cash and Eric Foner—were grouped in their own confederacy. Biographies peopled the upper shelves, and the Shakespeare bay was fully stocked. The place was peaceful at last.

Why, I now wonder, did this long-postponed task turn out to be so profoundly satisfying? Certainly there is the checklist aspect—one more "to do" to cross off the agenda—but there is more to it, I think. It has to do with the place of honor books hold in the

lives of a certain generation, namely, mine.

Making Us Who We Are

For me, a personal library is an almost sacramental repository of identity. To hold one of my books in my hand, to page through it and see my now-embarrassing marginalia, to read a forgotten personal inscription or to find a stray note hidden inside, is to recall part of my own formation as a person. Where I bought this book, what my life was like when I read that one, how another one changed my thinking—these mini-memories come dancing back into my consciousness, spurred by the physical encounter. The spines of the books on these shelves, now neatly lined up, are part of my internal structure; their titles tell a second story, the story of me.

I am not a Luddite. I have a Mac that I love, a smartphone and all manner of i-devices. I appreciate an e-reader as much as the next person, especially because I can Google unfamiliar references from the couch and look up unknown words with a quick tap of the finger. But I will never feel the same warmth for my Nook library as I do for my beloved books, marked up, dog-eared and deeply loved. They are far more than physical vessels for information; rather, they are the intellectual mile-markers of a life's journey.

Out of the welter of religious writings that were known to Judaism in



the first century after Christ, a fixed list of authoritative Scriptures gradually emerged. Although the ancient rabbis probably never set forth a formal canon of sacred texts, it is likely that there was extended discussion and debate among them as to which writings merited inclusion as holy and authoritative—which books, in other words, got to go onto the shelf. Their decisions ultimately gave us the Hebrew Bible. In fixing its boundaries

they were, in a sense, delineating and describing their identity as a people. These, they declared, are the writings that make us who we are. Far away in time and space from those early canon-makers, I have renewed my connection to my personal history by re-ordering my own *biblia*.

ELIZABETH KIRKLAND CAHILL is the co-author, with Joseph Papp, of *Shakespeare Alive!*



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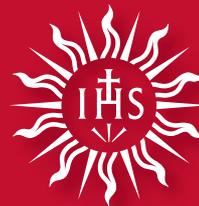
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LETTERS

Quiet Too Long

Re “A Voice in the Wilderness,” by Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. (4/2): J Street is a miniscule Jewish organization philosophically opposed by the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. To give this face-off some perspective, in 2006 two distinguished political scientists, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, wrote that A.I.P.A.C. was one of the most powerful lobbies in the entire United States. They detailed its overwhelming influence on U.S. foreign policy toward Israeli and argued that such support was not in the best interests of the United States or Israel itself. They concluded by calling for a more open debate about U.S. interests in this vital region. That was six years ago.

Since then there has been no sign of such an open debate. To the contrary, all serious candidates for the presidency have stated positions that could have been written for them by A.I.P.A.C., certainly not by J Street. Yet it is most refreshing that Father Schroth openly asserts the Catholic commitment to justice and peace—even in the Middle East. It has been a longstanding concern of the papacy, but Catholics in this country have been quiet on this subject for too long.

FRANK J. EVANGELIST
Huntington, N.Y.

What's the Obstacle?

“A Voice in the Wilderness” reports the vision of J Street’s Jeremy Ben-Ami for a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians: a two-state solution, based on 1967 borders with land swaps, abandoning many settlements, some form of sharing Jerusalem and an end to claims of “return” for refugees (presumably on both sides). What Mr. Ben-Ami proposes is in fact precisely what Israel has agreed to twice and what the Palestinian Authority walked away from twice. Mr. Ben-Ami’s

claims that Israel’s “insatiable hunger for land” is the biggest obstacle to peace and a two-state solution therefore make no sense.

(VERY REV.) DENNIS MIKULANIS
San Diego, Calif.

Cleveland Rocks

On the Current Comment page of April 2, I think you really missed the point about the “Cleveland Reprise.” While the facts are correct about Rome reversing Bishop Richard Lennon’s decision to close parishes, you imply that the parishes in question are perhaps some whose time had come. I can testify that the opposite is true about St. Peter’s, located in the heart of the city.

Every time I traveled to Cleveland, I made it a point to worship there and found it one of the most vibrant and engaged Catholic parishes in the country, always filled with worshipers. The homilies were exceptional and powerful; the parishioners were diverse, from all parts of the community, and passionate about their liturgy. To close such churches defies logic and Christian values.

BILL BAKER
Bronx, N.Y.

Personal Pietà

Margaret Silf’s “Blessed Mothers” (4/2) recalled a poignant pietà scene for me. Walking into the room minutes after my 31-year-old brother died of cancer, I saw my mother cradling his lifeless body in her arms as gently as the day he was born. Like our Blessed Mother, she had been there at his first breath and at his labored last.

In death my brother David’s body—head balded by the torture of chemotherapy, wounds in his hands and feet, scarred from the intravenous lines that had held hope of a cure and, finally, the familiar yet futile shunt in his chest—bore the wounds of Christ. Seeing my heartbroken mother with the broken body of her son, the only prayer I could utter was “Hail Mary, full of grace...pray for us at the hour of our death. Amen.”

JANET KOHLER CLAUSSEN
Atlanta, Ga.

Chinese Adaptations

Re “A Bridge to Beijing,” by John Worthley (4/2): The adaptation by Ricci’s Jesuit successors to Chinese ways was much more than “controversial” and “problematic.” Three times

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such attempts were quashed by the Vatican, which had little understanding of the issues: by Clement XI in “Cum Deus Optimus” (1704), by Clement again in “Ex Illa Die” (1715) and finally and definitively by Benedict XIV in “Ex Quo Singulari” (1742). These prohibitions were meant to stand forever, and so they did, at least until Pius XI in effect reversed them in 1935 and 1939.

Today, at least in Taiwan, to quote the priest historian Jean-Pierre Charbonnier: “The traditional rites in honor of heaven and the ancestors...were celebrated officially within the setting of the liturgy for the lunar new year. In Taipei, the archbishop, surrounded by dignitaries in long black robes, presided over the offering of fruit and incense before the great red tablet of wood, on which the following inscription had been inscribed in gold characters. ‘Honor to heaven; honor to the ancestors.’”

One wonders whether Benedict XIV is spinning in his grave, and (far more important) how the history of the church in China would have been different without “Ex Quo Singulari.”

NICHOLAS CLIFFORD
Middlebury, Vt.

Images of God

Concerning your editorial “They Came So Far” (4/2): In the images of the victims, whether photographic or verbal, we as Christians must always see the image of God. Correspondents and photographers who portray the suffering of war’s victims should not be voices crying in the wilderness, but prophets calling us to repent.

There is something wrong with us when we think we see the face of our Lord in a stained glass window or on a crucifix but cannot see it in a slaughtered Afghan child, a maimed Palestinian mother, a crippled Libyan

grandparent. If we could truly see with the eyes of Christ and feel compassion with the heart of Christ, we would not support a foreign policy that sees war as the paramount instrument of international relations and the profits of weapons manufacturers and military contractors as more important than the humanitarian needs of people.

CASSANDRA SPEAKS
Manila, Philippines

Draft for All

The elimination of the draft has caused or contributed to some of the current problems in our country. Our “leaders” in Washington display a cavalier attitude about sending our servicemen and servicewomen off to fight, because the large majority of them and their family members never served. Besides the ongoing deployments, little if any thought appears to be given to the increasing isolation of the military from the mainstream of the U.S. population.

If we accept the role of world power, we cannot do it on the cheap. A draft must include everyone of military age. If your number is drawn, you go. No exemptions. Our representatives and senators would think twice before allowing the president to involve us in another war.

JOHN RYAN
Virginia Beach, Va.

Correction

Several readers noted two errors in “They Came So Far” (Editorial, 4/2). The war correspondent Ernie Pyle was not at Normandy on March 17, 1944, but at Anzio in Italy. And Pyle died under enemy fire on April 17, 1945, not 1944, as the editorial suggested.

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WITHOUT GUILF



“This is my doctor. He’ll be doing my ordering for me.”

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

Peace in the Church

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (B), MAY 6, 2012

Readings: Acts 9:26-31; Ps 22:26-32; 1 Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15:1-8

The church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria was at peace (Acts 9:31)

In 2001 Cardinal Walter Kasper and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger conducted a friendly theological debate in this magazine on the nature of the church (4/23/01, 11/19/01). Cardinal Ratzinger argued for the priority of the universal church over the local church, even from its beginning. Cardinal Kasper challenged this as akin to a Platonic ideal, as if the church existed in some spiritual sphere only to be instantiated in the physical world by concrete communities. Cardinal Kasper argued that local churches provide the very basis for the universal church's existence. This debate was not merely about the early church but involved the question of where ecclesiastical power comes from and how it should be exercised.

The weight of scriptural evidence leans heavily toward Cardinal Kasper's position, at least in terms of word usage. Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, employs the term *church* 19 times, and in 18 instances he means the local community. The one exception is in today's first reading from Acts: "The church throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria was at peace."

When I look at the state of the universal church today, I do not see this enviable peace. Nor do I see it in the local church. In fact, my university church is a bit of a magnet for the disgruntled intelligentsia of the diocese. How can we return to the early

church's deep sense of peace? In truth, we cannot, because in many respects it never existed. One needs only to read St. Paul to see that not all was well with either local churches or the universal church. Paul publicly denounced Peter as a hypocrite in Antioch (Gal 2:11-14); he cursed any Christian who disagreed with him on the essence of the Gospel (Gal 1:8); he dressed down the Corinthians, who were in disarray (1 Cor 11:17-12:31); he recognized that some fellow preachers had really bad motives (Phil 1:15); he literally begged the Philippians to be of one mind and heart (Phil 2:1-5); and finally, he reminded his detractors that he was "not at all inferior to these super-apostles" (2 Cor 12:11). This is starting to sound like the church I know.

Luke is giving us an ideal church rather than the messy one that existed, but that does not mean he is falsifying things. Rather, Luke is pointing toward an ideal. He tells us that it is possible to know deep peace even while enduring persecution from the outside and challenges from within. It is interesting that this very passage in Acts describes Paul's meeting with the pillars of Jerusalem, who represented leadership in both the local and universal church (Acts 15). Having experienced his persecution of the church, they were wary. Barnabas assured them that Paul was one of them now.

He vouched for Paul, and we learn that soon Paul "moved about freely with them." More literally, Acts says that "he went in and out with them," which suggests companionship.

Such intimacy among us ultimately has to be rooted in Christ. In today's Gospel reading Jesus tells us that he is the vine and his true disciples are the branches. He reminds us that without him we wither and die, but with him and through him we flourish and produce great fruit.

If we want the church to be at peace, we should gracefully (and even gratefully) accept that it includes leaders in their legitimate role and firebrands who are allowed to be firebrands. We need solici-



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- What is your most frustrating religious conflict?
- Consider someone who holds a counterposition to yours.
- Pray every day for a month that he or she will flourish.

tous faithful as well as superiors willing to be stretched and challenged. And we need Barnabas-types, faithful guarantors who know how to bring them together skillfully. Above all, we need to recognize that we all live through Christ our life.

The Second Vatican Council taught us that we are a church of churches. Our uniqueness and plurality contribute to a complete expression of life in the Spirit. In both its immediacy and universality, the church should strive to be at peace.

PETER FELDMIEIER

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SOCIAL, POLITICAL,
LEGAL, AND ETHICAL
PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

MAY 21-22, 2012

*On the Saint Louis University
Campus in St. Louis, Missouri*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

**His Beatitude
Bechara Peter Rai**
the Patriarch of the
Maronite Catholic Church,
on refugees in the context
of Lebanon and the need
for inter-religious dialogue

**U.S. Rep. Luis
Vincente Gutierrez**
the first Latino to be
elected to Congress in the
Midwest, on immigration
policy and the U.S.
Congress

OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- **Cawo Abdi**, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Minnesota
- **Jaime Aguila**, Assistant Professor for the School of Letters and Sciences, Arizona State University
- **Sonal Ambegaokar**, Health Policy Attorney, National Immigration Law Center, Los Angeles
- **U.S. Rep William Lacy Clay**
- **Bob Fox**, Board Chairman of Casa de Salud, St. Louis
- **Dan Groody**, C.S.C., Associate Professor of Theology and Director of the Center for Latin Spirituality and Culture, Notre Dame University
- **Gene McNary**, former Commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service
- **Peter Neeley, S.J.**, Associate of Education and Formation, the Kino Border Initiative
- **William O'Neill, S.J.**, Associate Professor of Social Ethics, the Jesuit School of Theology, Santa Clara University
- **Ken Schmitt**, Immigration Attorney, founder and principal of U.S. Legal Solutions
- **Bishop Carlos Sevilla, S.J.**, retired bishop of Yakima, Wash., and a prelate of the Roman Catholic Church
- **Former U.S. Rep. Thomas Gerard "Tom" Tancredo**
- **Christopher Heath Wellman**, Professor of Philosophy, Washington University in St. Louis

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