America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY AUGUST 13-20, 2012 $3.50

Faith and The Voting Booth

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Change The Church?

DAVID J. O'BRIEN

OF MANY THINGS

Summer weekends afford me a rare pleasure: long afternoons uninterrupted by chores or errands. You can find me at the Jersey Shore, where my family and I have vacationed since I was the same age as my daughter, who is now 3. It is one of the few places where I can let the hours tick away unnoticed. It is also the best place for me to read.

I can mark my summers by the books I have read and the authors I have come to know. One summer was spent with the Swedish crime writer Henning Menkel and his world-weary detective, Kurt Wallander. Another summer found me in the company of Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, the heroes of Patrick O'Brian's series of novels on the British Navy. This summer I am exploring the work of three women writers, two already known to me, one a new discovery.

It is not really accurate to call Gillian Flynn a discovery, since her latest novel, *Gone Girl*, sits atop the New York Times bestseller list. But she was new to me when I started my way through her novels. As with many writers, I began at the end, starting with her newest book. You could describe *Gone Girl* as a crime novel, but I think a more precise term is needed to capture the originality of the story. Maybe "marriage noir." Told from the alternating perspectives of a husband and wife, the novel begins as a disappearance story but develops into a disturbing tale of betrayal and murder. And the first casualty is the reader. Consider yourself warned.

The title of Flynn's second novel, *Dark Places*, could sum up her entire body of work. The narrator is Libby Day, the lone survivor of a massacre that killed her mother and two sisters. Her brother, Ben, was arrested for the crime, but 25 years later a group of amateur detectives contact her for help. They are convinced he is not guilty. In summary the book sounds unremittingly, well, dark, but what separates it from pure pulp is the sharp portrayal of its characters. Flynn has a talent for writing about damaged young women who somehow survive with their dignity and humor intact. They may need a drink or two to do it, but can you blame them?

Flynn comes recommended by another doyenne of the crime genre, Tana French. I raced through French's books a few years ago after discovering the stunning *Faithful Place*. Her stories are set in Ireland and, in a neat trick, a supporting character from one novel becomes the protagonist in the next.

It is clear by now that I enjoy mysteries, but I am picky about which I choose to read. I look for one element that elevates it above the genre. In French's books it is the writing: sharp-edged and free of clichés. One character drinks enough "to kill Peter O'Toole."

French's latest, *Broken Harbor*, is a detective story set against the backdrop of Ireland's housing crisis. It is already downloaded to my Kindle.

For something completely different, I have my eye on Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies*, the second in a planned trilogy featuring Thomas Cromwell, the infamous adviser to King Henry VIII. The first installment, *Wolf Hall*, brought Cromwell out of the shadows of the royal court and made him the hero of his own story. The novel found its rhythm in the relationship between Cromwell and Thomas More, a contest made famous in the play and film "A Man for All Seasons." For a Catholic raised on that classic, it was shocking to see More rendered as a prim idealogue with a taste for torturing heretics. But that is the genius of *Wolf Hall*. Mantel conducts a rich symphony around a reviled figure in English history and, in the process, forces the reader to reassess historical assumptions.

A summer afternoon spent with Thomas Cromwell—how unlikely does that sound?

MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY

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Cover: Two-year-old MacKenna Rhoads opens the curtain as her father, Jerry, finishes voting in November 2008 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Rochester, N.Y. CNS photo/Mike Crupi, Catholic Courier

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ON THE WEB

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Libor Pains

The rate-setting scandal involving the London interbank offered rate, or Libor, has ensnared financial traders on both sides of the Atlantic. Authorities are investigating more than a dozen major banks for allegedly manipulating the rate, which is the benchmark interest rate used for financial transactions worldwide, in order to profit on trades. But special attention should be paid to regulators, who failed to rein in the practice. Officials at the Bank of England reportedly knew about the malfeasance as early as 2007; and in 2008 Timothy Geithner, then at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, sent an e-mail message to Mervyn A. King at the Bank of England urging reform. Mr. King, however, deferred to the British Bankers' Association, a private group charged with overseeing the rate setting, and both the Bank of England and the Federal Reserve lobbied to keep their recommendations anonymous. As a result, nothing was done, and the problem remained unresolved.

The case is another example of the lax regulation of the financial sector. Even in a case of obvious misconduct, the leaders of two major financial institutions were reluctant to "go public" with their knowledge. By deferring to a private banking association, the Bank of England allowed itself to be a pawn of the banking industry rather than a leader of it. Because the matter is so complex, public outrage is likely to be muted. Arrests of individual traders are expected, but a broader and more sustained examination of regulatory procedures is warranted. The scandal is further evidence that the banking industry cannot regulate itself, and that regulatory bodies like the Security and Exchange Commission and the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should be more robust and better funded.

Love Your Clients

Kevin Doyle was so effective as New York State capital defender that no one was executed, the death penalty was abolished, and his job disappeared. Recently the New York City Bar Association honored him with the Norman Redich Capital Defense Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Doyle's response to the award merits attention because in the current political climate, the dignity of every human life tends to be lost.

In his remarks Mr. Doyle listed motives that inspired death-penalty opponents: the "underdog ethic," determination to carry on the work of the 1960s civil rights movement, a desire to foster good government. "For some of us," he added, "it was a matter of religious faith."

The church over the centuries has had some "pretty awful chapters," he acknowledged, but "a Catholic understands that every person is made in God's image—every person black or white, rich or poor, born or unborn, innocent or guilty. And every life must be held sacred from conception to natural death—natural death, death in God's time, not the state's.... We brought all different motivations and philosophies, but we shared this in common—we loved our clients unconditionally."

Loving clients did not mean that defense attorneys infantilized their clients or ignored the grief and suffering they had caused, or that they shied away from difficult choices. It meant they had to earn the trust of these men, "most of whom never had reason to trust anyone."

Mr. Doyle concluded: "Love your clients. You will be better lawyers and you will be better people—and your cases will turn out better."

In Corpore Sano

Twenty-one people were treated for burns following their attempt to walk a 10-foot length of hot coals at a recent motivational event that featured Tony Robbins. The ceremony is part of a seminar meant to teach participants that they can overcome any obstacles in life. Approximately 6,000 participants attempted such a feat that day, willingly putting bare skin in contact with coals heated to temperatures ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 degrees in order to prove their mettle and determination.

But the bishops of the United Kingdom and Ireland have suggested an alternative method, perhaps a more productive one, for pushing one's body to the limit. In celebration of both the London Olympics and the Day for Life on July 29, Archbishop Peter Smith of Southwark, England, chairman of the Department for Christian Responsibility and Citizenship of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, urged Catholics to look to the training of Olympic athletes for inspiration. He reminded Catholics that "after years of dedicated training, personal sacrifice and daily discipline," the body can perform "feats that humanly we would think impossible."

In a world in which many seek instant gratification, these words call to mind Aristotle's belief that "we are what we repeatedly do." Character is not built in a single act but over the course of a lifetime. In their statement, the bishops also reminded Catholics to take care of their bodies and to use their bodies to glorify God: "The athletes in the Olympic and Paralympic games…testify that to achieve success in sport requires a harmony between the body, the spirit and the mind brought about through training and discipline."

After Aurora

Until mid-July, few Americans expected the words *gun control* to be spoken during this year's presidential election campaign. But when James E. Holmes fired his weapons, including a semiautomatic rifle with a 100-round capacity, in a packed movie theater in Aurora, Colo., the issue of gun control pinged back into the nation's consciousness, at least for an instant.

Why is it so easy for a killer to stockpile an arsenal of guns and ammunition without anyone's notice until the rounds rip into a crowd? Our society asked that question in 2011 after Jared Loughner's rampage in Tucson, Ariz. We are asking it again with the arrest of Mr. Holmes for allegedly killing 12 people and wounding 58 others. Is society powerless to prevent incidents like these? Or could a strong national ban on semiautomatic weapons plus a centralized system of record-keeping, background checks, licensing and monitoring of purchases have prevented this slaughter of innocents? If some say that gun violence is the cost society must pay for citizens to exercise the constitutional right to bear arms, then others must insist that the cost is too high. Constitutional rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly are subject to limits, and so should the right to be armed.

Gun control requires strong leadership and a supportive electorate, both currently in short supply. Several states (including California, New York and Massachusetts) ban assault weapons. Although Mitt Romney opposes gun control now, he was governor of Massachusetts when that state's ban was made permanent. Barack Obama vowed as a presidential nominee to reinstate the ban on semiautomatic weapons. During the Holmes case, however, he has not reaffirmed his vow, because tightening gun laws will not win him votes. Blaming politicians, though, is insufficient. As "the self-governed," we Americans should admit that no citizen needs a semiautomatic weapon. Catholics ought to champion gun control because restrictions would promote life, as they do in the case of abortion, the death penalty and euthanasia.

The national ban on military-style assault weapons, passed by Congress in 1994, expired with mixed results in 2004. The ban, neither clear nor strong enough, allowed too many exceptions, and foreign imports flooding the market offset the gains. Efforts to reinstate a ban have failed. So have such proposals as regulation of gun-show sales (which are lax on background checks and third-party buyers) and a ban on clips that hold more than 10 bullets. While the proposals might inconvenience gun owners, they offer significant gains to law enforcement and public safety. And if gun manufacturers were required to stamp shell casings for semiautomatic weapons, the police could identify the guns used in crimes—a major step forward. The gun lobby, however, has successfully fought each of these proposals.

In the weighing of rights, a gun-owner's "freedom" ought not to trump all the societal benefits to be gained from limiting it. That view is no longer popular. Instead, gun ownership has increased; the National Rifle Association has become a more formidable political force; some states have expanded gun rights; and the portion of Americans who favor gun control has shrunk. Even support for the assault weapons ban is at a record low.

After a massacre, questions about the collective good are typically raised. Yet they are put aside once the gunman is portrayed as a lone actor among millions of law-abiding gun-owners, whose constitutional rights ought not be infringed because of one oddball's misbehavior. Thus society allows individuals to build an armory, heedless of the rights of all Americans to live in safety.

Those who find legal limits intrusive and ineffective make comparisons to diminish the toll of gun violence; each year more people are killed by cars than by guns, they point out. Yet automobiles are not only licensed, but registration must pass from buyer to buyer; and every car owner must buy liability insurance. Society has a duty to hold car owners accountable, because cars can (and do) cause serious injury and death. That duty extends to gun owners as well.

Extreme individualism underlies the tendency to extend personal liberty at society's expense. That attitude also distorts other public policy debates, like those over taxation and health care.

Until society's preference for the unlimited exercise of individual rights over those of the common good is tempered, our nation will remain hostage to the gun lobby. And our politicians will be reduced to offering victims condolences rather than solutions to gun violence. Is this the society we want?

SYRIA

Massacre Looms in Aleppo; Opposition Seeks U.S. Response

The fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria is weeks away, but could be accelerated with more support from the Obama administration, said George Netto, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee of the opposition Syrian National Council and the group's U.N. liaison.

Netto expressed gratitude for the Obama administration's diplomatic efforts on behalf of the Syrian resistance, now battling Syrian army forces in Aleppo, Damascus and other cities, and for the U.S. role in delivering medical supplies and other nonlethal aid to Syrian refugees escaping the conflict in Turkey. But Netto wondered why the United States and other international powers, which had firmly defended the citizens of Benghazi when Libyan strongman Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi threatened its population, now seem incapable of similarly defending the embattled residents of the ancient city of Aleppo, home to one of Syria's largest Christian communities.

"It's not enough for the State Department to say, 'Our hearts are with the people of Aleppo,'" he said. "It's not enough to sit by and be sympathetic." Netto called for the United States to issue a warning that the bombing of civilians in Aleppo would cross a line. Even just the threat of a no-fly zone, he said, "will go a long way to protect civilians."

Netto also argued that the United States should revisit its policy on arms shipments to the Free Syrian Army. Netto said the F.S.A. controlled enough territory within Syria, particularly near the border with Turkey, to make aid delivery feasible. He complained that U.S. opposition to military aid had discouraged Turkey and Saudi Arabia from transferring weapons to rebel fighters, essentially leaving them at the mercy of the vastly superior Syrian Army.

"This is being portrayed as a civil war between two armies, but it's not really like that," Netto said. The volunteers of the Free Syrian Army, he explained, are loosely organized and lightly armed, attempting to defend what began as a nonviolent protest against the Assad regime—and now their families, friends and neighbors—against a modern army that has shown willingness to use heavy weapons, tanks and aircraft without discrimination.

Although more than 200,000 people have fled, most of Aleppo's two million residents remain trapped in the city. Densely populated neighborhoods are being targeted in a bombardment so intense the wounded and dead are being left to lie in the streets, according to Netto. "The fear of a massacre is not exaggerated," he said.

"There is a big likelihood that the regime will drive the F.S.A. out" of Aleppo, he said, "but that is not going to change anything." Netto said the regime's escalating brutality was only eroding what support it had left among Syria's Alawite minority.

According to Netto, a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church, many Syrian Christians, who may have reluctantly supported the regime as at least a protector of religious minorities in Syria, are joining the resistance because of the Syrian army's tactics. Netto downplayed concerns that Christians and Alawites face repression or worse at the hands of the Syrian opposition. "There are Christians among the underground leaders," he said, "and there are brigades of Christians among the fighters" of the F.S.A.

He said the opposition, with the help of the United States and other Western powers, has been preparing for months to assume control of Syria if the Assad government collapses, including plans for rebuilding, economic reforms and a new constitution that will protect religious and minority rights. He said the opposition was also working on procedures for "transitional justice."

"This is very important to us; we want to avoid blind revenge," he said. "Those who committed crimes need to be punished," Netto said, but the process must be controlled and just.

A devastated neighborhood after fighting in Homs, Syria, on July 27.

DEVELOPMENT

Accusations Are 'Inaccurate and Scurrilous'

Catholic Relief Services said that its decision to allocate $5.3 million in emergency funding to the humanitarian organization CARE in 2010 under a U.S. government grant did not violate Catholic teaching. In postings on its Web site on July 20 and July 24, the U.S. bishops' international development and relief agency explained that the money it provided to CARE was specifically used for water, sanitation and nutrition programs for poor families in Central America and Africa and could not be transferred to other services provided by CARE.

The C.R.S. statements came in response to an online report that criticized C.R.S.'s decision to work with CARE because that agency provides contraceptives and other family planning services to women. C.R.S. said the report, which made its way to several Web sites, contained "inaccurate and scurrilous accusations."

John-Henry Westen, editor of LifeSiteNews and author of the article, stood by the story. In particular, he pointed to the findings of John Haas, president of the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia and a consultant to the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, who said the distribution of funds to CARE could pose risk of "scandal." Haas, however, also told C.R.S. that none of the grants in question that the Catholic agency made to partnering organizations constituted support of or involvement in immoral activities.

"C.R.S. is not in agreement with CARE's policy on contraception because we do not support any positions that would be in violation of Catholic teaching on human dignity and the sanctity of human life," the church relief agency said on July 24. "Any funding Catholic Relief Services provides to CARE or any other international humanitarian organization comes from an outside source such as the federal government or a foundation, for a specific project, and has strict restrictions on its use.

"The grant in question with CARE," the statement continued, "was used to provide vitally needed food, clean water, sanitation services and basic nutrition programs to desperately poor families in Zimbabwe, Madagascar and five countries in Central America. Make no mistake about it, these programs are saving lives."

C.R.S. said on July 20 that it vetted its partnerships with CARE and other organizations in 2011 with Haas. The agency said the center's review concluded that none of the grants to partnering organizations constituted support of or involvement in immoral activities and that there was "little to no risk" of grant funds being used for programs outside of the grant request or for freeing up money at the receiving organization for immoral purposes. The review noted, however, that there could be a risk of "scandal over such partnerships if people become confused and wrongly assume that C.R.S. was endorsing a partner's position on other issues." C.R.S. explained that it continues to work with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the bioethics center to address such risk.

A homeless child stands in front of a make-shift hut in Nosybe, Madagascar.

China Priests Pressured

Chinese government officials have forced seven priests in Heilongjiang province who resisted the illicit episcopal ordination of the Rev. Joseph Yue Fusheng of Harbin to leave their parishes. The priests have either stayed with parishioners, returned to their hometowns or fled to other provinces. Prior to the ordination on July 6, religious officials within the Chinese government warned that disobedient priests would face dire consequences. In recent weeks, they ordered priests with "dissatisfactory performances" to take three months leave for self-examination. The seven priests were either absent from the ordination or openly expressed their opposition to Father Yue, who did not receive a papal mandate. The Vatican declared that Father Yue incurred automatic excommunication for participating in the illicit ceremony. Despite the action, he continues to celebrate Mass in bishop's garb.

NEWS BRIEFS


Oswaldo Payá

The Vatican announced on July 27 that **Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone** of Oakland, Calif., has been named archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. ⬩ Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, on July 13 called on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to "reinforce strongly" **U.S. opposition to an Israeli commission** that recommends legalizing all settlement outposts in the West Bank. ⬩ **Oswaldo Payá**, a prominent Cuban dissident, died in a car crash on July 22 in an incident that his family claims was "not an accident." ⬩ While sentencing Msgr. William J. Lynn of Philadelphia to three to six years in **prison for child endangerment**, Judge Teresa Samina said the priest turned a blind eye to "monsters in clerical garb" who "destroyed the souls of children." ⬩ Church leaders in India hailed the growing public demand for murder charges against those who aid and abet **female feticide**, a crime deep-rooted in India, which has only 914 girls for every 1,000 boys. ⬩ A federal judge in Nebraska on July 17 **dismissed a lawsuit** brought by seven states and a number of Nebraska-based Catholic entities that challenged new contraception requirements under the Affordable Care Act.

U.S.C.C.B.: Retain Tax Credits for Poor

Congress should extend "tax credits that help low-income families live in dignity," said Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., chair of the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. "Poverty in this country is historically high and growing. Currently over 46 million Americans live in poverty; over 16 million of them are children. In America today, the younger a person is, the more likely they are to live in poverty," Bishop Blaire wrote in a letter on July 25 to Congress. "Low-income tax credits are pro-work, pro-family and some of the most effective antipoverty programs in our nation." Bishop Blaire noted that the Earned Income Tax Credit and the refundable Child Tax Credit "lift millions of American families out of poverty and help them live in dignity and with greater economic security." He said that a just framework for spending cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor persons and that it would be unjust not to renew tax cuts for the working poor while addressing tax cuts for middle class and wealthy Americans.

Peru University Rejects Vatican Decree

One of Peru's top Catholic universities will continue to call itself Catholic and pontifical, despite a Vatican decree on July 21 aiming to strip the titles after decades of ideological tension. Lima's Pontifical Catholic University of Peru will preserve its title as long as the institution "considers it relevant," said university director Marcial Rubio. The Vatican has accused P.U.C.P. of causing "serious damage to the interests of the church" since the 1960s, when a Peruvian priest and instructor at the university, Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P., founded the institution's guiding principle of "liberation theology," promoting social justice and pan-Latin American solidarity. P.U.C.P. is an "institution created in Peru, governed by Peruvian law, not canonical law," Rubio said. "This is the official name by which we are known domestically and internationally," he added. "The university's assets are the property of the P.U.C.P. and are protected by the Peruvian constitution."

From CNS and other sources.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR.

Broken Promises?

Even among Americans who vote on a regular basis and are politically active in other ways, a majority doubts that what average citizens want or do really matters when it comes to who gets elected or what public policies get adopted. Ever more middle-class, working-class and low-income Americans have come to believe that they have no real political voice with elected officials and no actual influence over what government does or how it does it.

I wish I could dish up statistics, studies and stories to document how, contrary to popular perceptions, present-day American democracy approximates the ideal of government of the people, by the people and for the people. But the troubling truth is that today's average citizens are correct when they doubt their own political efficacy.

The latest and best evidence on this sad subject is in the superb book *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy* (2012), by the political scientists Kay Lehman Schlozman of Boston College, Sidney Verba of Harvard University and Henry Brady of the University of California, Berkeley.

As Schlozman and her colleagues stress, the fact that "political participation in America is stratified by social class" is old news. Research dating back to the 1950s reveals as much.

But as economic inequalities have become more pronounced, class-based gaps in individual political participation have persisted, while class-based gaps in organized interest activity seem to have widened. Citizens with incomes in the top fifth, for instance, are twice as likely to vote and eight times as likely to make campaign contributions as citizens with incomes in the bottom quintile.

As reported in *The Unheavenly Chorus*, interest groups in Washington, D.C., that represent for-profit corporations outnumber those representing labor unions by nearly 50 to 1. About 72 percent of all expenditures on lobbying originate with organizations that represent business.

> Americans are unequal both at the finish line and at the starting line.

With respect to lobbying expenditures, political action committee money, congressional testimony, amicus briefs and other measures of influence, political activity "on their own behalf by recipients of means-tested benefits barely exists.... The interests of unskilled workers receive none at all." And for all the talk about the rise of "public interest" lobbies and gender, race and ideological "identity groups," they too represent "a very small share of organized interest activity."

Schlozman and her co-authors throw cold water on the notion that participatory equality is being boosted by the Internet and social media. In 2011, trade and other business associations averaged about 1.6 billion mentions on Twitter per week compared with around 66.5 million for public interest groups and only 1.2 million for unions. The "interactive forms of online political participation" may yet reduce political inequalities, but that remains to be seen.

When it comes to political input, the report concludes, Americans are unequal both at the finish line and at the starting line. The authors advocate campaign finance reforms, lifting restrictions on voting, toughening restrictions on lobbying and liberalizing "rules governing public protests and rallies." But they duly acknowledge that their well-meaning proposals are all pretty much political moonshots.

The scores of millions of working people struggling to pay their monthly mortgages, formerly middle-class folks now feeding families with food stamps, de-unionized workers, the unemployed, welfare-dependent individuals and former prisoners begging for jobs are living "the broken promise of American democracy." These Americans are patriotic. They have civic spirit. But they are down on a government that does not hear or heed them, and they are disinclined to play a political game that they seem bound to lose anyway.

So, what is to be done? I wish I knew, but I suspect that the "erosion in union membership" (from about 21 percent in 1981 to 12 percent in 2010) is an even more important piece of the political inequality puzzle than Schlozman and her co-authors suggest it is. Without a rebirth of the American labor movement, our nation's interwoven economic and political inequalities will only become more sizable—and more sinful.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR. *is the co-author of* American Government: Institutions and Policies *(2012) and other books on politics, religion and public administration.*

COMPOSITE IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK/OLLY/AMERICA

How Catholics can overcome partisan divisions

In This Together

BY RICHARD E. PATES

Catholics who are serious about their faith and want to live it out in the public arena are challenged in today's political environment. The choice of a party is difficult. The parties themselves have serious flaws, and they often appear to flaunt precisely the issues most at odds with Catholic teaching. This teaching is rooted in the reverential respect and protection of the life and dignity of every human from conception to natural death. Our country's founders employed the phrase "self-evident truth" to convey the universal applicability of such teaching.

To their credit, Democrats have for at least a century recognized that government has a legitimate role in helping the poor and vulnerable. But these days Democrats more often grab headlines through their efforts to redefine marriage or by trying to determine which church activity is "religious" or by attempting to force Catholic institutions to provide employee health coverage for sterilizations and contraceptives, including abortion-inducing drugs. To their credit, Republicans for the last 50 years have opposed the abortion-approving Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade and have espoused family values. But Republicans now make headlines by advocating the slashing of federal programs, including those for the poor, and proposing anti-immigrant legislation.

Catholics have responded in various ways. Ross Douthat, a New York Times columnist and Catholic convert, says Catholics use their most deeply held values, whether that means defense of the unborn or care for the poor, to choose a party, but sooner or later they join "the side they're on." This is the opposite of what the U.S. bishops advocate in their document "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship." "As Catholics," it says, "we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our

MOST REV. RICHARD E. PATES *is bishop of Des Moines and chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths."

The idea is that Catholics should work within their parties to change them, creating a diverse and substantial group motivated not so much by ideology but by challenging cultural issues, large and small.

This is easier said than done. The bishops are asking Catholics to raise uncomfortable issues in sometimes exceedingly hostile environments. Many Democrats have worked strenuously since Roe v. Wade to purge dissenters on legalized abortion from party ranks. They have succeeded to the extent that pro-life Democrats find themselves in a no-man's land, often reviled for their views and distrusted by pro-lifers because of their party affiliation. More recently, Republicans have sought to purify party ranks of even the slightest variations from party orthodoxy. Republican candidates and legislators espouse increasingly hard-line positions punitive to immigrants and cut disproportionately programs that help the poor.

In this partisan environment, Catholics may feel "politically homeless," to borrow a phrase from John Carr, executive director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The parties' retreat from the ideological center has left Catholics with the understandable, but unfortunate impression that their only political option is to choose a side and join in to win the culture war. The resulting toxic acrimony has long since seeped into the church. Catholics must reverse this trend.

A Faith-Based Worldview

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago has advocated an end to the fixation over whether someone is a "progressive Catholic," an "orthodox Catholic," a "Vatican II Catholic" or a "traditionalist Catholic." He urges instead a focus on being "simply Catholic." In his final presidential address to the U.S. bishops, Cardinal George observed, "For too many, politics is the ultimate horizon of their thinking and acting," and the value of the church's role in public discourse is judged by how it will serve a partisan agenda.

Catholics must reject this mentality and act in a way that reflects a belief in a higher truth, seeing a greater horizon beyond that of a partisan agenda. This is the essence of "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," which urges Catholics to place the church's priority teachings at the heart of their worldview and moral decision-making. Practically speaking, this means that political positions should be judged by how well they express the values and truths of the faith, not the other way around. This requires examination of conscience and individual conversion. It requires Catholic voters honest enough not to ignore principle in favor of partisan preference. It requires legislators brave enough to risk the acceptance of their caucus and support among their constituents. It also requires a significant increase in trust and acceptance of people's good will at face value. In a scorched-earth political climate, partisans seldom raise a concern or value of the other side unless it is to denigrate it (call it socialist, anti-woman, etc.) or to say why it should not matter.

U.S. Catholics make up 29 percent of the current Congress—far more than any other single religious denomination—and hold 17 of 50 governorships. If any group can make an impact by unifying around its core principles, it is this formidable, diverse and culturally eclectic group. Pundits and pollsters point out that in the last few election cycles the candidate who has won the Catholic vote has also won the White House. But Catholics do not vote as a bloc, nor will they in the foreseeable future. Still, Catholics can make a positive difference on society.

Latino Catholics provide some hope. With strong pro-life, pro-family sensibilities and pro-poor and pro-immigrant views, they defy easy classification. They could transform either party that welcomes them and their concerns—a model for other U.S. Catholics. Pioneering modern Catholic social teaching in 1891 with his encyclical "Rerum Novarum," Pope Leo XIII proposed a middle way between the socialist and laissez-faire philosophies of the day. A case could be made today that a unified Catholic effort could bring both major parties to openness toward Catholic views.

One can only imagine the increased appeal of a Republican Party that extends its pro-life concerns to the years between birth and infirmity and applies its family values to poor and immigrant families. The same goes for a Democratic Party that embraces the challenge to society made by Edward Kennedy in 1971, to "fulfill its responsibility to its children from the very moment of conception," a challenge later abandoned.

Toward the Catholic Vision

One catalyst for promoting such a change should be the realization by people of both parties that they need each other to accomplish even their partisan political goals. Sometimes conservative goals have liberal solutions and vice versa. Both parties should pursue the common good more than partisan advantage. For instance, as Catholics work for legal protection for the unborn as a matter of justice, they can also advance pro-life goals by strengthening and enforcing anti-discrimination laws for pregnant women in the workforce. And they can advocate for more generous parental-leave

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benefits. The United States is one of the few countries in the world that does not require employers to provide paid parental leave for workers. If Bolivia and Haiti, among the poorest countries in this hemisphere, can offer two and three months of paid leave, the United States—among the richest nations in history—can certainly do more. Increased attention to this issue would show that the United States places a high value on human life. And it would help forge a cultural perception that pregnant women really do have options and that abortion does not have to be tolerated, even as a "necessary evil." The pro-life cause is also helped by making poor families a priority instead of an afterthought, so that no one can hide behind the excuse that people need abortions because "they just can't afford another child."

Meanwhile, the challenges of the highest domestic poverty rate in 15 years are too great for one party or philosophy to solve. Democrats must take seriously the concerns of Republicans that the government cannot be all things to all people. Republicans must take seriously the concerns of Democrats that the government has a role to play. Members of both parties must acknowledge the risk of future unsustainable deficits and put everything on the table to address the problem, including revenue, unnecessary defense spending, and just and fair entitlement reform.

The Catholic vision is one of collaboration, not coercion, among individuals, governments, businesses and other institutions. Its focus is not on profit or a winning ideology. Its focus is on creating conditions in which people can develop and ultimately flourish, in which their lives enjoy non-negotiable protection from conception to natural death, and thus can fully reflect the dignity God intended. This applies to every level, from individual to global. Following the principle of subsidiarity, the Catholic vision is to ensure that problems are tackled in the best possible context and that all stakeholders meet their responsibilities to one another. Subsidiarity locates responsibility at the lowest feasible level of society and requires other levels to support them in meeting their responsibilities. Both parties lack this vision or at least do not trust each other enough to make decisions that favor the common good consistently. Catholics could help and lead by example.

Catholicism has appeal across centuries, cultures and ideologies. Today the church can evangelize by working among people with various perspectives to counter the excesses of ideology. It might often make people angry, but it also would make the Catholic voice more difficult to ignore, elevating it above mere partisan agendas. It would give the church renewed credibility as a moral voice and force in the culture. In the words of "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," "We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a better world." A

Citizens of Faith

Bringing morality into the voting booth

BY VINCENT ROUGEAU

For most of my formative years, until I was almost 30, the Washington, D.C., area was home for me. Politics brought my family there; my father initially worked for a U.S. senator and went on to work in the Carter administration. When I was in college, I spent two summers as an intern for the same senator for whom my dad had worked, and I began my career as a lawyer in Washington as well. I mention all this to say that from a very early age, my life was filled with the day-to-day of American political life, and I can say with significant personal knowledge that the operation of democracy in the United States (never a pretty process here or anywhere else in the world, for that matter) has become increasingly debased and cynical.

The sense of national responsibility and leadership that transcended party loyalties has all but evaporated, replaced by a coarse pandering to public opinion. There is no end to what we must endure in this regard, from the heckling of the president in a joint session of Congress, to the broadly held assumption that the Supreme Court justices should behave like political hacks. Despite the physical grandeur of our nation's capital, one senses a slowly advancing internal rot driven by small-minded "principle" and personal self-aggrandizement.

Voting, Citizenship and Faith

Given this environment, I have been moved to think carefully, as we approach another presidential election in November, about what it means to be a citizen of the United States who is also a person of faith. Although my faith has a great deal to do with how I think things ought to be, I make political decisions based on the world as it is. The United States I observe today is a place riven by two warring ideologies about the role of government that have reached an impasse, lacking in a strong sense of common purpose and rooted culturally in libertarian individualism. This suggests to me that my political decisions need to be about the "big tent" issues and not the political sideshows. As a Catholic, therefore, I am most concerned about how our government promotes human dignity, the common good and meaningful participation in the life of the community for all.

The U.S. Catholic bishops have offered us a compelling guide for thinking about faith and political life in their document "Faithful Citizenship," and much of what I have to say about this topic draws on the themes they have developed so carefully. It is not my goal to restate what they have written, but to reflect more personally on how I understand my responsibility as a voter and citizen in the context of Catholic teaching.

How might that translate to specific issues relevant in this election? Take, for example, our health care debate. Although the Supreme Court has relieved some of the pressure on the issue with its most recent ruling, the fact remains that the idea of providing universal health coverage remains extremely controversial in the United States. The House Republicans recently wasted precious public resources by conducting a purely symbolic vote to "repeal" the Affordable Care Act despite its survival of the Supreme Court challenge. Mitt Romney subjected himself to 17 seconds of sustained booing by boldly repeating his intention to repeal "Obamacare" at the annual convention of the N.A.A.C.P.

Most countries with the necessary financial means (and some without it) have provided universal health care to their citizens and residents for decades because it was fairly obvious that human dignity required it. Universal health care is a moral imperative, something a political community ought to offer if it hopes to encourage meaningful membership and participation in the community, both of which are essential to a well-functioning democracy.

In the United States, however, many people do everything they can to prevent the entire population from receiving health coverage because they cannot stand the idea that the government (as opposed to the free market) might be in the best position to provide it or because they despise the president and his political party or because of disagreements about whether particular procedures should be covered. Although I take very seriously the role we as Catholics should play in bringing our values to the discussion of specific aspects of national health care policy, I think it is more

VINCENT ROUGEAU *is the dean of Boston College Law School.*

important to make sure that everyone who needs health coverage has it—period. Allowing people to go without access to decent health care in the midst of this nation's extraordinary affluence is at best a shameful misdirection of our priorities and at worst evidence of a nation blind to the basic requirements of social justice.

Beyond Borders

Another hotly contested issue of great importance to me is the concept of citizenship itself and the question of who can be part of the mainstream in American society. The philosopher Gary Gutting wrote recently in The New York Times about the moral questions raised by patriotism and the tensions it creates with a more universal morality rooted in cosmopolitanism—a philosophical concept that proceeds from a belief in the existence of shared moral obligations that are owed to all human beings. To whom do we owe equality of esteem, dignity and respect? Is it primarily to our fellow citizens? Do geopolitics and nationalism create our moral boundaries?

People for and against the health care reform law demonstrate in Washington, D.C., on June 28.

Certainly, there must be some sort of shared moral understanding among a defined group of people to give meaning to concepts like human dignity and equality, but as a Catholic I have always thought that my faith leaned heavily toward a vision of human worth that was not necessarily limited to Americans. After all, the nation-state and the accompanying concept of nationalism are relatively modern phenomena, and Christianity proposes a universal message about the dignity of the human person. This does not mean that our particular loyalties to family and country are unimportant, but they exist in the context of God's unbounded love for all of us.

What, then, does this universality mean for a political issue like immigration? The United States is a settler nation and cannot be understood apart from waves of migration over three centuries. Our ability to absorb new migrants has long been our strength. Yet, many of us are unwilling to own this history in the face of substantial non-European immigration; we seem unable to appreciate the very real possibility that ongoing resistance to the integration of undocumented migrants in particular will create a new permanent underclass in American society. It is as if the agony of our nation's relationship with slavery and segregation has taught us nothing.

Perhaps some of the political discord around this issue is rooted in the different daily realities experienced by those who live in the United States of the future—one of cosmopolitan metropolitan areas, multicultural neighborhoods and globally oriented workspaces—and those who live in the America of the past—defined primarily by Anglo-Protestant cultural dominance, post-World War II economic prowess and a firm belief in the United States as the world's exceptional nation. This second America is passing away, and, for better or for worse, nothing can be done to bring it back.

I believe the faithful citizen casts his or her vote recognizing the country as it is and with a vision of what it could be in the best of circumstances going forward. The United States will soon be a majority nonwhite nation in which the former American understandings of "white" and "black" will lose their meaning. How will this affect U.S. culture and identity?

The U.S. economy will be driven by global economic events and policies over which the U.S. government alone will have little control. Can we continue to speak seriously about American exceptionalism? Social, cultural and political structures we have become familiar with over the last two to three centuries will change, and some of these

CNS PHOTO/BOB ROLLER

changes will occur much more quickly than we expect. Raw assertions of political power may slow some of them down but probably will not stop them. Trying to resurrect a world that has passed away is futile, and the attempt is often more destructive than the changes we seek to prevent.

Recognizing the reality and inevitability of change, we should remain focused on promoting core values of Catholic teaching by seeking ways to make them intelligible in new social, political and economic conditions. Health care for all can unite a diverse population around a shared system of social benefits and promote a sense of common purpose through dignified provision for children, the poor, the weak and the elderly. A managed admission of immigrants and migrants to our nation allows us to reap the benefits of global movements of people, which can open up new possibilities for economic innovation, spark urban renewal and revive aging communities. Catholic social teaching provides important intellectual and moral content to a public discussion about why pursuing these policy goals would be a good thing, both morally and pragmatically.

No Pandering Allowed

Finally, we must be very wary of attempts by politicians and their handlers to pander to our most selfish instincts and separate us from our common sense, something that has become endemic in American public life. If I could ask one thing of my fellow citizens prior to this election, it would be for them to refuse to respond to infantile, reality-show politics and its false assertions, half-truths and mindless chatter. Let the Romneys ride their speedboat and the Obamas vacation on Martha's Vineyard. What do the candidates for president propose to do for the country as the summers get hotter and sea levels rise? Does cutting taxes for the wealthy in the face of a historic recession create jobs? One candidate says it does and the other says it doesn't. One of them is wrong or lying.

Neither political party in this country can be seen as a proxy for being a "good" Catholic in political life. Each of us must attempt to negotiate a role for ourselves as Catholic Christians in a secular society, one that allows us to share what we believe with our fellow citizens while maintaining our personal freedom to live out our faith in peace. There are no guarantees that we will convince them that our way is best. The notion of freedom of individual conscience within a political system that protects religion without favoring one particular faith over others is at the heart of the American experiment, but it can be very difficult to execute in practice. It is, nevertheless, a tradition that makes me proud to be an American. A

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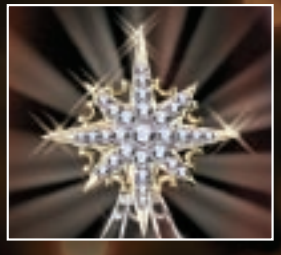

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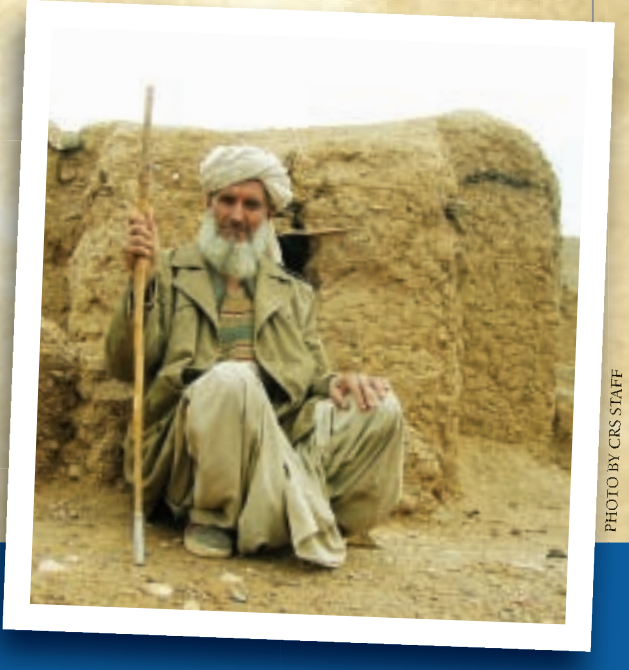

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Mohammad Ayoob leans against a sun-warmed wall in the cold of winter.

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Voting Matters

Issues to consider before election day

Voting is no simple, single-issue game. Instead, it requires of the electorate both breadth of information and serious discernment about issues and priorities. In order to help readers make informed choices in November, we composed a short list of issues we think are important and asked experts to focus briefly on one of them. What follows are three: on jobs, income inequality and global trade.

The Editors

How to Create Jobs

BY TERESA GHILARDUCCI

Four-and-a-half years after the Great Recession began and more than two years since the official recovery started in March 2009, 19 million Americans who want a job cannot find one. Many economists (including myself) are frustrated because, while there are many effective ways to create jobs, political polarization in Congress has blocked necessary action to address the economic and human costs of unemployment. Below are four specific ideas about how jobs could be created now, with increased borrowing by the federal government.

1. States could extend the school day and school year by 25 percent, hiring new teachers and support personnel. That would be a triple win: for children, for working parents and for women, who would likely obtain many of the new education jobs. It also would improve the educational performance of students, especially those in poor neighborhoods, which would help their future employment prospects.

2. The federal government must provide another round of aid to cities and states because state and local governments cannot legally run annual deficits. In order to balance their budgets, states and cities are laying off essential public workers. In 2010, for example, Newark, N.J., laid off 167 police officers; the following year crime in that city rose by 21 percent.

Cuts like these also hurt the economy. Had public employment remained level throughout the recession, instead of declining by over 700,000 jobs, our national unemployment rate would be close to 7 percent at this point rather than at May's level of 8.2 percent.

3. Governments at all levels should make major investments in America's aging infrastructure. Bernard L. Schwartz, an investment banker, and others have called for major public investments in our roads, bridges, airports and water and electricity systems through a national infrastructure bank, monitored through a separate Congressional capital budget. This would help our long-term economic future and provide jobs in construction,

People wait in line to enter a job fair in New York, April 2012.

PHOTO: REUTERS/SHANNON STAPLETON

where unemployment in June was close to 13 percent.

4. Tax policy can also be used to create jobs, though that method is less effective than direct spending. Still, by extending unemployment benefits and lowering the payroll tax for workers, Congress and the Obama administration created around one million jobs and added a full percentage point to gross domestic product growth in 2012 alone.

There are many other good ideas for job creation, including retrofitting houses to save energy and to accommodate the elderly and disabled. The Annie E. Casey Foundation recently released a list of job creation measures that could expand our physical and human infrastructure, educate children and adults and maintain and improve our infrastructure and public spaces.

Job growth should be financed by increased federal borrowing, which we can easily afford. Interest rates remain at a very low level, and U.S. debt is still viewed as the world's most secure option, especially given the ongoing financial crisis in Europe. When the economy does return to robust growth, the federal deficit must of course be dealt with—but not until then.

In recessions, tax cuts and government deficits can help restore growth, but they are no substitute for a government's investment in the important things we cannot buy in private markets with our tax breaks, things like bridge and road repairs, public parks and schooling for the nation's children. For these we need the political will to borrow money to pay our own workers to build, teach, care and guard.

In short, we do not lack effective ideas for immediate job creation. We lack the political will to create jobs.

TERESA GHILARDUCCI *holds the Irene and Bernard L. Schwartz Chair of Economic Policy Analysis and is the director of the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis in the department of economics at The New School for Social Research. She was also an economic policy advisor for the late Senator Edward Kennedy.*

Lost Opportunity?

BY CHARLES K. WILBER

Most people favor equality of opportunity, at least in principle. Few, however, believe equality of outcome is possible or even desirable. While it is possible that attempts to force equality of opportunity through governmental intervention in the market might reduce individual incentives, which in turn might reduce output, it is already clear that inequality itself distorts incentives and restricts opportunities. How does this apply in the United States?

Compare two groups of children. The first group is born into wealthy families with parents willing and able to provide books, museum visits and high-quality schooling at private universities. The second group has parents who struggle to put food on the table, who live in areas where the schools are run down and understaffed, and where expectations are low and hope for the future not reinforced at home or at school. Children from the first group almost invariably do better economically than those of the second. While some children from very disadvantaged backgrounds achieve success, most do not. The truth is that our vaunted social mobility is mostly a myth.

In fact the United States has less social mobility than most other developed countries. Ron Haskins and Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution show in their book, *Creating an Opportunity Society*, how poorly the United States does. For example, 42 percent of those born in the bottom fifth of the income distribution remain there as adults. Only 6 percent of those born into a family from the bottom fifth climb to the top fifth as adults. The United States (with 42 percent of its population mired in the bottom fifth) has the least mobility when compared to Denmark at 25 percent, Sweden at 26, Finland at 28, Norway at 28 and Britain at 30.

Extreme income inequality also shifts ever more political power from lower- and middle-class households to the richest. The recent Supreme Court decision in Citizens United

PHOTO: REUTERS/LUCY NICHOLSON

People line up for lunch at a food bank in Los Angeles, Calif., in May 2011.

v. Federal Election Commission, which made possible the growth in "super-PAC" spending, is making this problem worse by increasing the importance of money in politics.

The disparity in the distribution of wealth (total assets) is even greater than the disparity in income—so great, in fact, that the richest 400 people in the United States control more wealth than the entire bottom 50 percent of households. A number of these 400 are pouring in millions of dollars to influence elections, which allows them to change the rules in their favor—banning collective bargaining by public employees in Wisconsin, for example, and enacting so-called right-to-work laws in Indiana.

Some claim that inequality is not a problem, that because the rich invest and create jobs, helping them helps everyone. From the past 40 years, however, there is little evidence to support this claim. Real median household income has declined over the last decade; before that it had been stagnant since the 1970s. Wages for males with a high school education have fallen substantially over the same period. Most of the benefits of U.S. economic growth have gone to those in the top percentile of the income distribution. By 2007, just one out of 100 Americans (the top 1 percent) received nearly a quarter of all personal income, more than the bottom 50 percent of households put together.

CHARLES K. WILBER *is emeritus professor of economics and a fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.*

Commerce as Compromise

BY DANIEL FINN

People often misunderstand international trade because they misunderstand domestic commerce. Cheaper transportation of goods by 19th-century railroads, for example, made it possible for wheat to be grown by those who grew it most efficiently—Midwestern farmers. The lower price of flour allowed the budgets of consumers in the East to stretch farther, giving them just as real a rise in economic well-being as a wage increase would have given. The U.S. Constitution prevented eastern states from levying protectionist taxes on wheat from the Midwest to shield their own wheat farmers, who as a result had to find other work. Consumers were the winners.

Trade is also why the 19th-century unification of Germany increased economic well-being there. It removed the perennial taxes and paperwork imposed on imports by tiny governmental districts. Europe today is worried about the Greek financial crisis largely because it threatens to dissolve the euro-zone agreements that make trade and travel easier.

The loss of jobs is typically the main complaint against trade, and it is a very real concern. Yet independent studies (those not paid for by interested parties) have shown that trade tends to create (some) more jobs than it destroys. The problem is that the jobs lost in the United States are low-skilled, which leaves the working poor to bear the burden of trade. Since our government decided to expand trade, we are morally obliged to use part of the gains from trade to fully fund the shamefully inadequate "trade adjustment assistance" (used for retraining and relocation) for those unemployed because of trade.

When employment is lost here due to trade, jobs are created abroad. This is a real moral gain in poor nations. Hundreds of millions of very poor people now have greater economic well-being because they make things we buy. The common good today is global.

Most trade agreements are rightly criticized for ignoring the abuse of workers and of the environment. The World Trade Organization avoids such "non-trade" issues to prevent selfish protectionism, a well-founded fear. Nonetheless,

PHOTO: REUTERS/DONALD CHAN

Workers make shoes, which will be exported to the United States, at a factory in Henan Province, China, in April 2011.

trade agreements and the W.T.O. must include basic labor and environmental standards.

Some criticize the use of fuel for the ships that carry 90 percent of the goods exchanged in international trade, but ships are remarkably efficient. Given, for instance, the fact that ships generate less than 4 percent of world carbon-dioxide emissions, improvements in auto and truck mileage would do far more for the environment than would a reduction in trade. Then there is the energy used in production in different nations. It takes less energy to produce sugar from cane in the hot sunshine of Brazil and ship it to the United States than to produce sugar from beets in Minnesota.

Which brings us to a final issue: U.S. subsidies and trade barriers. Both should be cut back dramatically. The United States spends about $25 billion each year on agricultural subsidies, but only $1 in $10 goes to a needy farmer. And subsidized U.S. farm products undercut local farmers in the global South. The U.S. exclusion of textiles and sugar similarly hurts the people we should be helping. Our brothers and sisters in the developing world can and should be producing many of the products we buy.

DANIEL FINN *is a professor of theology and the William E. and Virginia Clemens Professor of Economics and the Liberal Arts at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn. He is a past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, the Society of Christian Ethics and the Association for Social Economics.*

Change the Church?

Reform requires will, skill and political organization.

BY DAVID J. O'BRIEN

My friends and I have worked for many years for renewal and reform in the Catholic Church. We took heart from the Second Vatican Council, the 1976 Call to Action Conference, the U.S. bishops' pastoral letters on racism, war and economic justice in the 1980s, the awakening of Latinos and the commitment of new immigrants and the amazing generosity of Catholic women. To our great satisfaction, renewal has happened, and is happening, in our American church, but reform is another matter. A Vatican II report card might give renewal a B-plus. But reform, even in the very best dioceses, would only get C-plus, and in too many places a well-deserved F.

CNS PHOTO BY SAM LUCERO, CATHOLIC HERALD

Attendees at the national Call to Action Conference in 2004 listen to the Chicago journalist Robert McClory lead a workshop titled "Why I Stay in the Church and Why You Should Too—Despite Everything."

At the end of the Call to Action conference (the American Catholic Church's first and only national convention), Cardinal John Dearden said that we had begun "a new way of doing the work of the church in the United States." If we had carried out the cardinal's vision, if we had built shared responsibility in parish and diocesan pastoral councils, if we had formed self-confident associations of diocesan priests, religious and laypeople, and if Catholic academic, medical, social service and ministerial professionals had acted responsibly, then the scandals of clerical sexual abuse would have ended between 1984 and 1993. Files would have been opened, new systems of accountability established, pastoral priorities reordered and priesthood reformed. Criminals would have gone to jail and incompetent administrators would have been turned out of office.

That did not happen, however. The moderate, realistic, nonideological reforms of Cardinal Dearden's new way (reforms that would have given shape to the term "the people of God") are not in place in a great variety of parishes, dioceses and institutions. Church reform has its deep and mysterious dimensions, to be sure, but the basics are not rocket science. We know, and have known, how to ensure transparency, accountability and shared responsibility in ways that support the mission of the church; that strengthen, not weaken, the authority of pastors; and that ensure the integrity of the community of faith. But all that did not happen. What was lacking among us was neither knowledge nor imagination but will and skill, commitment, organization, strategy and tactics. Our failure was not theological or spiritual, but political.

Talking Politics

If we are serious about changing the church, what we must talk about is ecclesiastical politics. Keeping the faith may be pastoral and spiritual, but changing the church is political. People have many different ideas about changing the church. Politics is the process of sorting out those ideas and making choices among them. In history, Catholic factions who were upset with conditions in the church would call on

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DAVID J. O'BRIEN *is the University Professor of Faith and Culture at the University of Dayton. This article, adapted from a talk delivered 10 years ago, in July 2002, at the founding conference of Voice of the Faithful, makes points about the need for church reform that remain pertinent today.*

the government, in best cases the king, to carry out reforms. But the state cannot help us; it is our responsibility as Catholics to make our church a more genuine community of shared responsibility and thus a more genuine witness to the presence of Christ.

Three critical factors will shape the life of the church in the United States in years to come: the universal church, American society and the social composition and location of U.S. Catholics. Each factor has a political dimension.

The Universal Church. What happens in the Vatican and among our sister churches across the globe will make a big difference for us. The Holy Spirit is at work through people. Some good people are working hard to slow the process of renewal, strengthen the church's central offices, reverse its ecumenical and interfaith initiatives and moderate its ministries of service to development and peace. But renewal is not over; millennial-era synods around the world have offered considerable evidence of post-colonial vitality and deep commitment to human rights in churches worldwide. There is still hope that Catholicism can once again be a communion of local churches rather than a multinational clerical organization with branch plants in each country. In the universal church of the future there will be winners and losers, as there were at Vatican I and Vatican II. As we have learned in our own American Catholic politics in recent years, organized people often gain ground, while those not well organized are disappointed.

Although we often trusted the powerful men's religious orders to take care of our political concerns in Rome and across the world, their political strength has now waned. That has left U.S. Catholics who are interested in church reform standing alongside women religious outside the walls of the Vatican. Gazing down at us are the grinning faces of restorationists, who may have little support back home but are welcome in Vatican offices.

U.S. Society. What happens to our country will to some extent determine what happens to our church. The American people's radical freedom, restless quest for community, accelerating religious and spiritual diversity, heroic and paradoxical dedication to their country and its highest ideals touch us because we share them. So do their retreat from civic responsibility, temptation to narcissism and abuse of power. We Catholics are American insiders. Saying that U.S. society and culture will help shape our Catholic future does not mean that we are passive playthings of cultural forces beyond our control. No, we are active participants in shaping a common life as Americans that is no less real because we deny responsibility for it. What we Catholics do to our America, not just what our America does to us, will make a difference in the future of our church.

The Face of U.S. Catholics. How will we provide pastoral care for this ever changing church? New immigrants arrive, Latinos struggle for self-determination through the *encuentro* process, religious orders spend their limited resources caring for their aging members, and middle-class Catholics become more evangelical, more congregational and more detached from the organizational life of the institutional church. Ours is the bewildering church the Rev. Andrew Greeley once referred to as "do-it-yourself Catholicism," with genuine explosions of new energy in the charismatic renewal, the peace movement, a distinctively Catholic branch of the women's movement and apostolic movements like Focolare and Sant'Egidio. Schools, hospitals and social service institutions flourish with the help of lay professionals and collaborative boards. Thousands of lay men and women carry on many of the church's pastoral and social ministries.

But the organization does not work well. After Cardinal Dearden's Call to Action, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin struggled to build that new way of doing the work of the church. But Vatican II bishops were replaced by more cautious men; priests' organizations all but disappeared; religious orders lost numbers and influence; and the burgeoning cadres of deacons, pastoral assistants and directors of religious education never organized. Their ministries continued, but the common life of the church in the United States shriveled. Rather than contest the ground, pastoral leaders adopted the congregational option: we have a good parish and don't need to go to meetings. In the resulting vacuum Catholics became divided, even polarized. When Cardinal Bernardin suggested a Catholic Common Ground Initiative, other cardinals insisted that the only thing needed for unity was the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and guidance by the Holy See. In that climate divisions deepened, pressing pastoral problems were ignored, and our church experienced some yet undetermined degree of corruption. So we face a political challenge.

An Organized Lay Movement

Few things would better serve the needs of the church than an enthusiastic, self-confident, engaged Catholic lay movement to keep the faith and change the church. Toward that end I make a series of appeals:

1. *Ask in the church the political questions you would ask in any other public forum.* Who is in charge and how did they get there? What is the relationship between power and authority? Are we depending on the good will of an individual bishop or pastor, or are we building systems that express shared values and common objectives?

2. *Say yes to all invitations to genuinely shared responsibility.* Catholics do need to work together, and there is no virtue in opposition. Say yes when our parish or diocese tries to find structures of decision-making that mirror the body of Christ and when we are invited to help make parish and diocesan

pastoral councils more effective. Say yes when boards of Catholic agencies doing good work need assistance.

3. *Say yes to independent associations.* You will be asked to choose: parish councils or school advisory boards, Voice of the Faithful or Call to Action? If you are a priest, your choice may be between the presbyteral council and an independent forum for priests. The answer is a Catholic both/and, not either/or. Cooperation and negotiation work well when participants are genuinely empowered. There are such things as premature, incomplete and phony collaboration. Parish and diocesan pastoral councils will improve when priests, pastoral staffs and laypeople are better organized and better understand their distinct vocations.

4. *Make a preferential, but not exclusive, option for the laity.* Think lay. Ask what each church decision or proposal means from the point of view of ordinary lay men and women. Pastoral care in our society requires dialogue, communication, relationships of mutual trust and understanding. Any layperson, for example, could explain that having two priests visit a family to determine whether their claim of clerical sexual abuse is valid is not a good idea. The lay viewpoint is vital.

5. *Think about the church as it is on a Wednesday morning at 10 rather than on a Sunday morning at 9.* The church is the people of God, the body of Christ, the very presence of Christ in this particular time and place—all the time, not just when people gather at the church. The test of Christian discipleship is the life we live. Catholics everywhere should recapture an idea once identified with Chicago Catholicism: that ministries, structures and prayers should be appropriate to the Catholic community, since its people are scattered in workplaces, households, neighborhoods and public squares.

6. *Recognize lay holiness and talk about it.* According to Vatican II: "It belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life, from which, as it were, the very web of their existence is woven" ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," No. 31).

7. *Affirm and ask the help of laypeople who work for the church.* Talk to lay ministers, sisters and deacons. Ask yourself: Are they paid well? Do they have good working conditions, access to adequate resources, a place at the table when pastoral policies and priorities are established? If not, why not? They are not mini-priests, after all. If they were organized, and if they would work with like-minded groups, that could make a difference.

8. *When you get discouraged, think mission.* The why of our church is as important as the what. Our piety and practice, our ministries and offices, are supposed to serve the mission, the purpose, the work of the church. If Jesus came to make known the meaning of life and history, and if after Pentecost Jesus lives on in his church, then there is great work to be done. We can only do it together. Our mothers and fathers sought for us education and material resources so we could have choices they never had. They did not expect us merely to maintain the church and hand it on, but rather to use our freedom and power to keep the faith and, if necessary, change the church so we could change the world the way God would want it changed. In a time of crisis for church leaders, we have to help one another keep that hope alive.

9. *The church is all about people.* It is a voluntary organization, as our children keep proving to us, that works through persuasion, not coercion. Many of our past problems came about because we did not trust each other. Restoring and preserving trust begins with simple encounters, like the ones used in the interfaith organizing process. Changing the church begins with getting to know each other well enough to work together to make our church, to make us, the presence of Christ. Our rootless young people have a deep hunger for friendship. It is a gift of grace in our churches, mosques and synagogues. As we work toward church reform, let us look for leaders who genuinely like people. As we do, we may witness a renaissance of pastoral life. All the rest will follow. In that spirit let us do the best we can to keep the faith and change our church. A

FAITH IN FOCUS

Help Wanted

A prayer for frustrated Catholics

BY JAMES MARTIN

Dear God, sometimes I get so frustrated with your church.

I know that I am not alone. So many people who love your church feel frustrated with the body of Christ on earth. Priests and deacons, and brothers and sisters, can feel frustrated, too. And I'll bet that even bishops and popes feel frustrated. We grow worried and concerned and bothered and angry and sometimes scandalized because your divine institution, our home, is filled with human beings who are sinful. Just like me.

But I get frustrated most of all when I feel that there are things that need to be changed and I don't have the power to change them.

So I need your help, God.

Help me to remember that Jesus promised he would be with us until the end of time and that your church is always guided by the Holy Spirit, even if it's hard for me to see. Sometimes change happens suddenly, and the Spirit astonishes us, but often in the church it happens slowly. In your time, not mine. Help me know that the seeds that I plant with love in the ground of your church will one day bloom. So give me patience.

Help me to understand that there was never a time when there were not arguments or disputes within your church. Arguments go all the way back to Peter and Paul debating one another. And there was never a time when there wasn't sin among the members of your church. That kind of sin goes back to Peter denying Jesus during his passion. Why would today's church be any different than it was for people who knew Jesus on earth? Give me wisdom.

Help me to trust in the Resurrection. The risen Christ reminds us that there is always the hope of something new. Death is never the last word for us. Neither is despair. And help me remember that when the risen Christ appeared to his disciples, he bore the wounds of his crucifixion. Like Christ, the church is always wounded, but always a carrier of grace. Give me hope.

Help me to believe that your Spirit can do anything: raise up saints when we need them most, soften hearts when they seem hardened, open minds when they seem closed, inspire confidence when all seems lost, help us do what had seemed impossible until it was done. This is the same Spirit that converted Paul, inspired Augustine, called Francis of Assisi, emboldened Catherine of Siena, consoled Ignatius of Loyola, comforted Thérèse of Lisieux, enlivened John XXIII, accompanied Teresa of Calcutta, strengthened Dorothy Day and encouraged John Paul II. It is the same Spirit that is with us today, and your Spirit has lost none of its power. Give me faith.

Help me to remember all of your saints. Most of them had it a lot worse than I do. They were frustrated with your church at times, struggled with it and were occasionally persecuted by it. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake by church authorities. Ignatius Loyola was thrown into jail by the Inquisition. Mary MacKillop was excommunicated. If they can trust in your church in the midst of those difficulties, so can I. Give me courage.

Help me to be peaceful when people tell me that I don't belong in the church, that I'm a heretic for trying to make things better or that I'm not a good Catholic. I know that I was baptized. You called me by name to be in your church, God. As long as I draw breath, help me remember how the holy waters of baptism welcomed me into your holy family of sinners and saints. Let the voice that called me into your church be what I hear when other voices tell me that I'm not welcome in the church. Give me peace.

Most of all, help me to place all of my hope in your Son. My faith is in Jesus Christ. Give me only his love and his grace. That's enough for me.

Help me God, and help your church.

Amen.

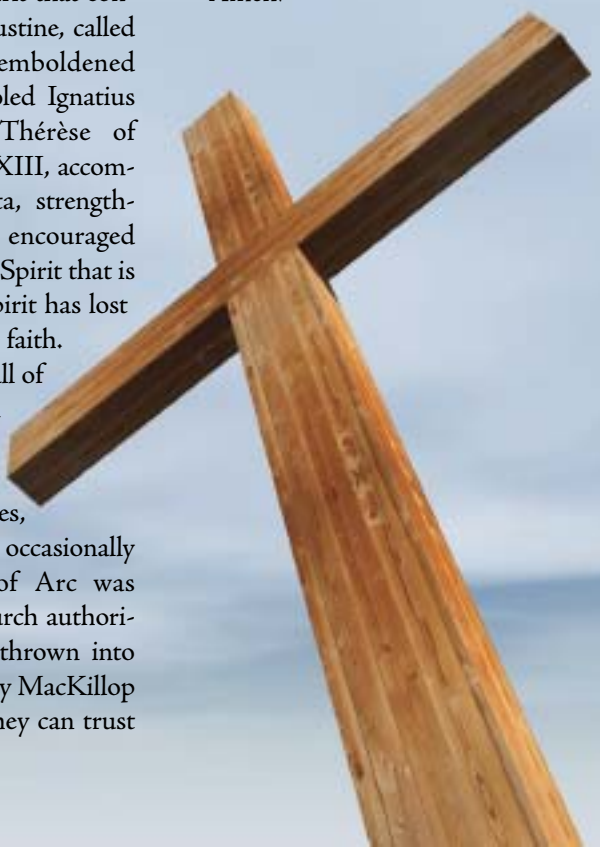

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/DESIGN36

JAMES MARTIN, S.J., *is a contributing editor of* ***America.***

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IDEAS | MARK SILK

PLAYING THE PONIES

How the media track presidential races

Twenty-five years ago I was given the job of covering Michael Dukakis, the eventual 1988 Democratic presidential nominee, for The Atlanta Journal Constitution. This time, the political editor told me, we are going to try to focus on the issues, not the horse race.

In the end it was, as before and since, the horse race that we and the rest of the press focused on. The political editor's vow was high-minded, but it did not make much sense to me then. And, perennial as it would become in newsrooms across the country, it does not make all that much sense to me now.

What are "the issues," anyway?

Every presidential campaign has a stack of position papers on just about any issue you can think of. Are political reporters supposed to work their way through the stack, comparing and contrasting the positions of Candidate A and Candidate B for the benefit of an uninterested public?

Or should the news organization itself decide which issues matter and devote coverage to them? (It's the economy, stupid reader!) Or should we in the media survey voters on which issues they think are important and focus on those?

What if we conclude that the voters are more concerned with personalities than issues in choosing their next president? Should we still devote our attention to issues because we think issues should matter? And isn't it a race that we are covering anyway?

I do not mean this sequence of rhetorical questions to suggest that issues, however defined, may not matter in a presidential campaign. Or that news organizations do not perform a useful service by giving the issues that matter a proper going over. Nor am I proposing that coverage of presidential

COMPOSITE PHOTO: AMERICA/SHUTTERSTOCK

campaigns has not changed over the decades—or that there is no room for improvement.

Game Changer

No single journalist did more to change the way presidential campaigns are covered than Theodore H. White, author of the "Making of the President" series of best sellers that ran from the 1960s Pulitzer Prize-winner through the 1972 book that, thanks to Watergate, nearly blew up in White's face. As it happened, the research assistant who cobbled the Watergate story together for White in the spring of 1973 was me.

Before the "Making of the Presidents" series, campaign coverage focused on substantive pronouncements and proposals—the issues—as hints of what a candidate would do in office. But these did not much interest White. He lived in New York, not Washington, and the beat he sought was out in the wards and the parishes, the bars and the Rotary clubs, the granges and the union halls. He discovered gold in the previously unreported arcana of endorsement mongering, delegate hunting, campaign financing and the demographics of race, region and ethnicity. His story was the race, which he covered like the war correspondent he had been when he reported on China for Henry Luce in the late 1930s and 40s.

"The wrecker of political journalism," the screenwriter Frank Mankiewicz called him, only half-jokingly, in 1988. Mankiewicz was the manager of George McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign. "You give a speech on the U.S. getting out of the Persian Gulf and reporters only want to ask, 'Did the Dukakises offer you watermelon?' or 'How many delegates did Paul Simon give you in Illinois?' That's all people care about anymore: politics, not government."

Nowadays, "Teddy White" stories remain the norm, though because of

the current crisis in journalism there are fewer boys (and girls) on the bus to write them. The cheap alternative to on-the-ground campaign reporting is provided by the seemingly endless supply of survey data that rolls onto computer screens from a host of pollsters of varying degrees of competence and disinterestedness.

ON THE WEB
Stephen Martin talks about his book, *The Messy Quest for Meaning*.
americamagazine.org/podcast

The surveys provide stay-at-home journalists with sufficient wherewithal to follow the race and write about it, but without the human contact, the sights and sounds and smells, that give a campaign story life. Surveys also create illusions: that voters have settled opinions worth reporting early in a campaign cycle or that there is a single national electoral contest rather than 50 state presidential races.

Issues Rising

So maybe it is time to go back to focusing on the issues after all. The challenge is to figure out how best to do it.

The simplest approach is just to examine those subjects that get put on the table by the campaigns themselves, however real or unreal they seem to be.

At this writing (the end of May), a small but intense debate has broken out over the extent to which President Obama has increased government spending. This is a factual matter, subject to a certain amount of definitional dispute. It is also a poor substitute for a discussion of the meaning of the federal deficit and the size of government. So be it.

Meanwhile, the claim that President Obama was born in Kenya has re-entered the campaign, promoted especially by the developer Donald Trump, the country's foremost "birther." Mitt Romney refused to reject this view shortly before attending a fundraiser hosted by Trump, but later said he disagreed. To be sure, it is not the president's birthplace but Romney's apparent readiness to pander to the Republican fringe that is the issue—a legitimate one.

Then there are issues that particular interest groups manage to push into public consciousness. The Catholic bishops' response to the Obama administration's contraception coverage mandate is a fine current example. Whether "religious liberty" is truly under threat, as the bishops claim, is a matter of debate. But there is no question that, at least prior to the Supreme Court's decision on health care reform, it was an issue worth writing about.

Such examples could be multiplied. They are the kinds of limited things that political reporters have little trouble addressing because they easily lend themselves to short narratives and sound bites. Also, examples like these are an integral part of the cut and thrust of a campaign.

But they are not the kinds of big, complex things editors have in mind when they say they want to address "the issues" rather than the horse race. Those issues are all but impossible to integrate into campaign coverage.

Sure, there will be (in The New York Times and The Washington Post and maybe even the newsweeklies) long take-outs on "health care reform" and "financial regulation" and "economic policy" and whatever it is we are calling our military adventure in Afghanistan. But they will stand apart from the ebb and flow of the campaign, and they will not have much impact on it.

MARK SILK *is a professor of religion in public life at Trinity College in Hartford. He blogs for the Religion News Service and is co-author, most recently, of* One Nation, Indivisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics.

BOOKS | LORETTA TOFANI

MAINLAND MALAISE

THE END OF THE CHINESE DREAM

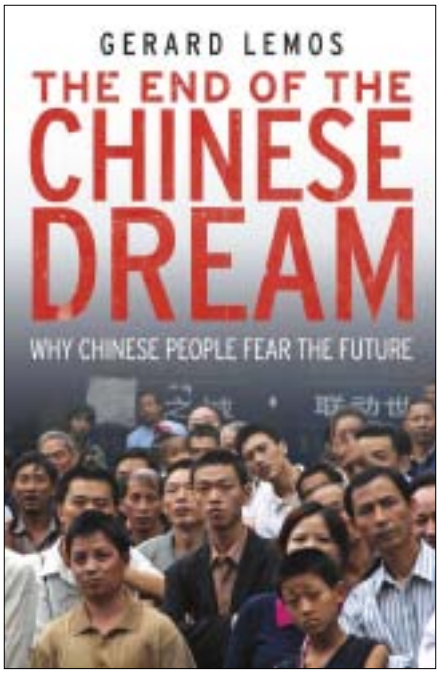
Why Chinese People Fear The Future

By Gerard Lemos
Yale University Press. 320p $38

Gerard Lemos, a former visiting professor in China from the United Kingdom, paints a disturbing picture of the failure of China's extraordinary economic growth to benefit hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens. After conducting a remarkable survey in China, Lemos links the economic problems and fears of ordinary Chinese to the policies of China's authoritarian leadership, both local and national. Although most of Lemos's research occurs in Chongqing, where the recently deposed Politburo member Bo Xilai was party secretary, the problems he describes exist throughout China.

In *The End of the Chinese Dream: Why Chinese People Fear the Future*, Lemos concludes that "the People's Republic of China is now run by the wealthy for the benefit of the wealthy." Hundreds of millions of ordinary Chinese are the losers. They are "deeply insecure about themselves and their future" he writes, just when the rest of the world has become "starstruck by the apparent prospect of China's imminent glory."

The author, a social policy expert, was a professor at Chongqing Technical University from 2006 to 2010. He was interested in whether policies to support people through the transformation to a market economy



were working. After conducting a survey of more than 2,500 Chinese citizens in Chongqing and Beijing, he concluded they were not. On paper, he asked four questions: Who are you? What event changed your life? What is your biggest worry? What do you wish for? He designed the survey in a creative, innocuous way in order to get the necessary permission from officials.

Those surveyed worried about finding jobs, keeping their jobs, getting sick, affording medical treatment, paying for their children's education and having enough to live on in their old age. These modest ambitions, Lemos writes, "are the true Chinese dream," but for millions "that short-lived dream has died."

Still, China has succeeded in drastically reducing poverty, from about 85 percent in 1985 to 16 percent in 2005. But hundreds of millions still cannot find enough money to pay for the services that the government provided until about 1980.

Lemos quotes many of those he surveyed. A 42-year-old man from Chongqing, for example, wrote: "[My greatest worry is] I couldn't find a job and couldn't afford to go to hospital and I'm also worrying about my child's education fee. [I wish] to find a job to support my child's education and to have health insurance."

Such concerns are strikingly similar to those of Americans. But the "safety nets" that exist in the West—unemployment insurance, pensions, workers' compensation—are extremely stingy in China, mere tokens. Free health care no longer exists for most Chinese citizens.

During the 1990s, I and other foreign correspondents in China wrote about the lack of safety nets. But our stories were anecdotal, not based on surveys. Now, 20 years later, hundreds of millions of Chinese still have reason to be anxious. I saw the lack of safety nets again a few years ago when I interviewed factory workers in China who had developed fatal illnesses or suffered limb amputations because of factory work. Although China has worker protection laws, they were not enforced. Workers were not warned that the chemicals they used or metals they breathed could kill them. Those who developed fatal silicosis or cadmium poisoning were given paltry amounts of money as compensation.

The Chinese government, Lemos argues, should attempt to create a national safety net. It should also provide social services.

Instead, Chinese must provide their own safety nets. One of Lemos's more interesting insights is that the large amount of income saved by Chinese is not only the result of Chinese habits and culture, as is sometimes argued. The savings are essential in the attempt to provide health care, education and stability during old age or joblessness.

In China, much of the money lent by banks for real estate and construction comes from ordinary deposits by ordinary Chinese citizens. "So there is no incentive for the Communist party to change the model and provide social services," Lemos writes.

Lemos does not mention the estimated billions of dollars that the Chinese government has invested overseas during the last decade, especially throughout Africa. The investments have been for mining and the acquisition of rights to the world's rare earth elements; meanwhile Chinese citizens worry about joblessness or paying for basic health care, education and retirement. In some ways the portrait Lemos paints of China has striking similarities to the current snapshot of the United States, where trillions of dollars have been spent overseas—for fighting wars—while citizens grapple with the lack of medical insurance and joblessness, which is at least partially caused by millions of our jobs going to China.

Lemos argues that democracy is not necessary for the Chinese government to provide its citizens with a better quality of life. Yet it is hard to imagine, from Lemos's portrait of the one-party government, that there will be significant improvements for ordinary citizens any time soon.

Where, then, is hope for the ordinary Chinese citizen? Lemos believes that there may be a national uprising in China. "It has happened unexpectedly in so many countries, why should China's citizens be different?" They are different, I would argue, because of China's police state, which includes cameras in cities (and some homes) and an extensive network of Internet surveillance, cellphone surveillance and an army of plain clothes citizens paid to spy on fellow citizens and foreigners. This year's budget for the domestic security apparatus was $111 billion, $5 billion more than the budget for the military. If China spent less money on surveillance, it might have more money for safety nets for its citizens. And then it might need less surveillance. Lemos does not make this particular argument, but it seems perhaps another piece of the picture.

LORETTA TOFANI *won a Pulitzer Prize while reporting for The Washington Post and covered China for several years for The Philadelphia Enquirer. Her most recent investigative articles exposed the exploitation of Chinese workers making products for the U.S. market.*

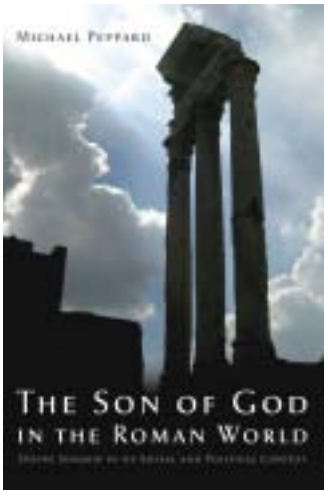
BRIGITTE KAHL

DIVINE GENEALOGY

THE SON OF GOD IN THE ROMAN WORLD

By Michael Peppard
Oxford University Press. 304p $74

It is an iconic scene: Jesus being baptized in the Jordan, with a heavenly voice declaring him "my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased," while the Holy Spirit descends from above as a dove. But what if an eagle had come down on Jesus instead and perched on his shoulder? What if a more adequate translation of Mk 1:11 were, "You are my beloved son; I have adopted you"? In a fascinating tour de force, Michael Peppard takes his readers back into the world of the New Testament, where none of these questions would sound odd or out of place as they do today.



The council of Nicaea (325 C.E.) had not yet spoken, authoritatively condemning any "adoptionist" heresy. Platonism with its static divisions between humanity and divinity, metaphysical essence ("begotten") and historically situated status ("made/adopted") was not yet the all-defining thought system. And the "Son of God" represented a surprisingly dynamic, multivalent concept that could embrace both divine adoption and begetting, including a wide range of other elements like divine election, genealogy, virgin birth, creation and pre-existence in varying configurations. It was not the issue of orthodoxy that loomed large when Mark, as the first among the Gospel writers ventured into the uncharted territory of transforming Paul's message about Christ as the divine son into a narrative.

What loomed large was the massive and oppressive presence of that other divine father who had just destroyed Jerusalem and subdued the rebellious Judaea with brutal force, claiming that all of humanity was under his paternal power and jurisdiction (*patria potestas*): the Roman emperor.

Drawing on recent studies by historians of the ancient world like Ittai Gradel, Clifford Ando and Monika Bernett, Peppard dispels some persistent misconceptions among New Testament scholars, who have traditionally underestimated the significance of imperial ideology and played down the divinity attributed to the Roman emperor. In Roman Palestine, as in all other parts of the Roman world, the emperor was omnipresent as universal God, universal Father (*pater patriae*) and Son of God (*divi filius*) through temples, images, coins and public manifestations of all sorts—and he was worshiped as such in multiple ways. Imperial divine fatherhood and imperial divine sonship both played a pivotal role as empire-wide unifying power constructs that could draw on the social microcosm of the existing patriarchal household structure. As the emperor morphed into the divine

super-father of the largest family on earth (*pater patriae*), the designation of his successor through an adoption as "son" became a crucial issue of power and political stability.

According to Peppard this has direct implications for the opening scene of Mark's Gospel. If the heavenly father in Mk 1:11 in all likelihood pronounces a divine adoption formula, this implies by no means a "low" Christology devoid of divine essence, nor a sort of heretic Proto-Arianism; rather it competes with the "highest" possible and most potent divine adoption story in place, the transfer of world power to Caesar's divine son. Mark frames the beginning of the Jesus narrative as the story of an adopted divine son who is going to be a counter-emperor.

Peppard makes very clear that such an act of "colonial mimicry" does not simply duplicate Roman colonial ideology but has strongly resistant traits. The "son" who is adopted to all-powerful divinity in Mark 1 will in the end be executed for his insubordination against Roman law and order, sharing the lot of the conquered rather than the glory of the conquerors. The dove represents weakness, vulnerability and peace in contrast to the violent majesty of the warlike eagle, which in Roman imagination was a common accessory whenever a new power figure appeared on the stage of history.

Furthermore, the sonship embodied by Jesus, especially in the Pauline matrix, rejects all exclusivity. It integrates the universal community of Jesus-followers, to use nonhierarchical and noncompetitive terms, into a horizontal family of sisters, brothers and mothers, where "fathers" have no more role to play, including the imperial divine father. At the same time, the paternal "inheritance" is no longer a matter of individual privilege and power but a communally shared good. All this marks a striking dissonance with the most basic ground rules of the Roman patriarchal and imperial order that consequently turned Christians into martyrs.

Peppard has written a stimulating and eminently readable book that courageously cuts through established theological conventions and presents new scholarship in a careful and nuanced way without ever becoming tedious. He uses the tools of his trade to reconstruct the rich reservoir of meaning-making encapsulated in New Testament and early Christian traditions, enabling us to see the "son of God" with entirely new eyes. In an exemplary way, this book shows that a fruitful encounter between critical biblical scholarship and dogmatic tradition does not lead to skepticism but instead breathes fresh air into those compartments of Christian doctrine where rethinking and reimagining, instead of reciting old formulas, is urgently needed. Far from relativizing the "son of god," Peppard demonstrates where the present-day relevance and true challenge of this term might be located: not in metaphysics but in concrete social models for how the human family can truly become humane.

ON THE WEB
This week's Catholic Book Club selection.
americamagazine.org/cbc

BRIGITTE KAHL *is a professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York.*

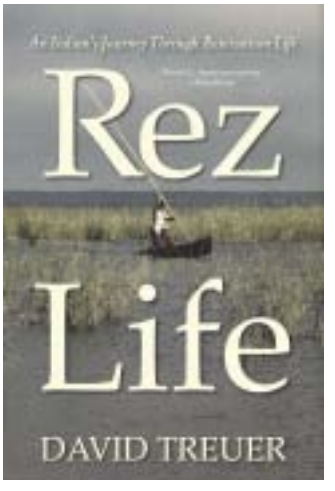
CHRIS MANAHAN

ANOTHER AMERICA

REZ LIFE
An Indian's Journey Through Reservation Life

By David Treuer
Atlantic Monthly Press. 368p $26

When reading *Rez Life*, be prepared to have a struggle over what the book is and what you might like it to be. Part history, part social analysis, part memoir and part journalism, the book takes the reader through the reservation life that the novelist David Treuer, who is Ojibwe, has experienced from his days growing up among Minnesota's reservations to today, when he shares his time between the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota and Los Angeles, where he is professor of literature and creative writing at the University of Southern California.



His first full-length work of nonfiction is a "hybrid," he admits, in his concluding note to the book, and "it is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive." It is this hybrid quality that may cause the reader to find no single part as satisfying or complete as desired.

The lengthy historical and political explanations, summaries and synthesis of tribal relations with the United States are written in an easy-to-grasp manner and remind one of a conversation with a friend who is interested and well-versed in a particular topic. But without the footnotes that one might find in a scholarly, academic work, the reader is left wondering if this is a complete

understanding of the nuances of this complex history.

The social analysis of reservation life fostered by first-person stories, conversations and memories is vibrant and raw, bringing the reader into the private tensions within reservation life; but, because of its anecdotal presentation, the reader is left asking whether the same is true for reservations generally and whether common solutions for these social ills can be found?

Finally, the author's experiences and observations give the work its memoir quality, which stops short of indicating what other people think or feel. So again, the reader is left to wonder about the people to whom Treuer introduces us: "Do I really know what makes them tick?" Treuer writes that he "refrained from speculating or giving them feelings" so as not to blur fact and opinion. This is to his credit, yet the reader wishes he had asked more questions and shared the answers.

Still, Treuer has provided an excellent sense of reservation life, which is what he hoped to do. His stories tell what it is like to grow up on a reservation, live there, leave and return as an outsider.

Focusing on individuals with representative experiences, he deals with tribal sovereignty, taxation and casino gambling while telling the homespun story of Helen (Bryan) Johnson, whose fight over a $147 county property tax bill led to the 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision that is credited with opening the way for casino gambling on Indian reservations. As a 31-year-old Head Start worker raising six children with her husband, Russell, in a two-bedroom trailer on her family's Leech Lake ancestral land, Johnson was an unlikely force for change, but Treuer reveals through her story the practical aspect of tribal sovereignty. The reader learns about treaty rights, control of land ownership, reservation poverty, housing, politics and governance, the effects of Indian boarding schools, child welfare conflicts and the loss of language and culture in the midst of fighting acculturation within reservation life.

Black-and-white photographs begin each section, stark and unadorned, like figurative road signs welcoming readers to the reservation and piquing their interest in the persons in the pictures. Unlike motorists who pass through without stopping, *Rez Life* readers have Treuer sitting next to them to tell us who is who and how they fit into the reservation. But, more often than not, he may leave the reader wanting to know more.

CHRIS MANAHAN, S.J., *formerly a parish priest on the Rosebud Reservation and a teacher at Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Reservation, both in South Dakota, is currently superior of the Jesuit Novitiate of St. Alberto Hurtado in Saint Paul, Minn.*

LETTERS

Substance Abuse

Re "State of Disunion," by Thomas R. Murphy, S.J., (7/16): I cannot imagine any set of circumstances under which it will be possible to bridge the partisan divide in this country in my lifetime. The primary reason is that the overwhelming majority of Americans are not properly educated in what it means to exercise the awesome responsibility of citizenship in a democratic society.

Most of us are told that our primary responsibility as citizens is to secure a well-paying job that will enable us to purchase as many consumer goods as possible and that our educational system should be geared primarily to achieve that.

Is it any wonder, then, that partisans of all stripes are incapable of understanding the substance of their own arguments, let alone understanding or even acknowledging facts that threaten their self-reinforcing positions?

CHRISTOPHER KUCZYNSKI
Baltimore, Md.

Invitation to Renewal

"Into the Future," by Nancy Sylvester, I.H.M., (Web only, 7/16) rings true to my own experience, having entered my community in 1962, the year the Second Vatican Council began. My whole early formation was steeped in the challenging message of the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" and other council documents.

Like most sisters at the time, we took the invitation to renew our lives as perhaps the most significant act of obedience that we would ever undertake. We learned to see our vows as deeper and broader than merely not having a bank account, not having sex or not having our own opinions. We came to see poverty as including an active care for the earth and identification with all of her peoples. Chastity, while it includes celibacy, became more and more about healthy, loving relationships. And we collectively came to know that obedience can never be limited to mindless following, but includes active listen-

ing in community—a listening that seeks to hear all of the voices of God's people.

FRAN FERDER, F.S.P.A.
Lincoln City, Ore.

Magisterial Affliction

As someone who came into the church in the 1980s, it was the spirit of the women religious that appealed to me and welcomed me. I would never have found a home in the pre-Vatican II church, and I am struggling greatly with what is happening locally in my home parish as well as the greater church.

I am hearing messages that have no connection to serving the poor or relevancy to the God of the universe. I have always heard that the message of the Gospel was meant to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. What I am now hearing from the magisterium seems to be afflicting the afflicted and comforting the comfortable.

PATRICIA JANSEN
Mason, Ill.

Off Center

Re "Interrupting Grace," by T. B. Pasquale (7/16): In centering prayer, the sacred word is a symbol of our intention, which is to consent to God's presence and action within us. One establishes his or her sacred word before entering the prayer, not during it. Centering prayer has one intention. There are no expectations, such as finding bliss, peace or union.

Mental hyperactivity or thoughts are an integral part of the prayer. We do not resist them. We let them come and we let them go. When we engage a thought, we become aware that we are engaged with the thought. We then gently return to our sacred word. The idea of contemplating one's sacred word is really foreign to the centering prayer practice, as is focusing and concentrating. Centering prayer is not contemplation. Contemplation is a pure gift from God. With all due respect, whatever T. B. Pasquale was doing, it wasn't centering prayer.

JAMES BYRNE
Cape May Court House, N.J.

Capital Correction

John Coleman, S.J., in "The Matter With Kansas," his review of *Red State Religion*, by Robert Wuthnow (7/2), lauded Kansas for its early stand on women's suffrage and the fact that it "never adopted capital punishment." Kansas has, in fact, abolished and reinstated capital punishment three times, and capital punishment is currently legal, although the state has not carried out an execution since 1965. The latest effort to abolish the death penalty failed in the Kansas state senate in 2010.

BARBARA EMERT
Independence, Kan.

Prudence and Compromise

Re "How Well Are They Being Heard?" (Signs of the Time, 7/2): I am among the 57 percent of American Catholics who do not believe that the right to religious liberty is being threatened in the United States today. Of course, involvement with the state brings complications. When the state and a church enter into a contract to deliver health services or adoption services to the general public, neither the state nor the church will remain quite as uncompromised as before.

I'm not suggesting that anyone should contract away convictions of conscience. But not all moral consideration have the same weight, and prudence may suggest that you can cooperate to some degree because of the benefits to the church and the public.

This is a complex business. It is not well served by slogans or litigation that make shrewd compromise impossible, but by reflective conversation invoking the cardinal virtue of prudence.

(MSGR.) JOHN ROWAN
Southold, N.Y.

Beyond Bars

The article, "Theology Behind Bars," by Kerry Weber (7/2) should be a strong stimulus for penal administrators, prison ministers and us, the non-incarcerated, to seek more wisely and intensely the humanization and rehabilitation of our country's inmate population. We would all, as a society, be the healthier for it.

There are other points of light in the penal system. One is in the state of Virginia, at Buckingham Correctional Center, where Jens Soering is serving two life terms for murdering his girlfriend's parents in 1985, when he was 18 years old. He is now in his mid-40s.

While incarcerated, Soering has converted to Catholicism. Sadly, despite being a model prisoner and a decidedly different person from the man who was convicted, rightly or wrongly, for homicides committed when he was 18, he has been denied release seven times by the state parole board. Enlightened penal reform and inmate rehabilitation should enable us as a society to do better than this.

ARTHUR T. McNEILL
Alexandria, Va.

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 14 combined issues: Jan. 2–9, 16–23, Jan. 30–Feb. 6, April 16-23, June 4–11, 18–25, July 2–9, 16–23, July 30–Aug. 6, Aug. 13–20, Aug. 27–Sept. 3, Sept. 10–17, Nov. 26–Dec. 3, Dec. 24–31) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodical postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope. Circulation: (800) 627–9533. Subscriptions: United States, $56 per year; add U.S. $30 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. $56 per year for international priority airmail. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, P.O. Box 293159, Kettering, OH 45429.

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Flesh and Blood

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), AUG. 19, 2012

Readings: Prv 9:1-6; Ps 34:2-7; Eph 5:15-20; Jn 6:51-58

"The one who feeds on me will have life because of me" (Jn 6:57)

Jesus is Wisdom in the flesh. In the wisdom books of the Old Testament, God was understood as having created through Wisdom, who existed with God from the beginning of time (Prv 8:22 ff; Wis 9:9). Wisdom pitched her tent among us as the voice of the Lord and the source of life (Sir 24:4-8; Prv 2:6; 3:18). John's Gospel identifies Jesus with all of this.

In the first reading, from the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom is personified as a grande dame who invites any and all to her banquet, a great feast where she offers the rich fare and choice wines of true insight. "Let whoever is simple turn in here.... Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live."

Wisdom's banquet serves as a background to Jesus' discourse on the bread of life, which we have been hearing proclaimed these past three Sundays. Jesus assures his listeners that "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst" (6:35). Two columns ago I pointed out the imperative of making a choice for Jesus and clinging to him. Last week we experienced Jesus inviting us to communion with him in his self-offering: "The bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world" (6:51).

In today's Gospel reading, from the final portion of the discourse, Jesus' words become positively shocking: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.... For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." Such a proclamation seems scandalous. For Jews the consumption of any blood was forbidden (Gn 9:4; Lv 17:14) and the use of the term *flesh* (*sarx*, "meat") is particularly vulgar.

Jesus' teaching created both confusion and disgust in his listeners. Understanding his words on a superficial level, they imagine him to be calling for cannibalism, with himself as the victim. Yet there is something quite literal in his intention, even as it is also symbolic. He really meant it. Jesus really is Wisdom's true divine feast.

Just as Jesus cannot be understood outside of the Old Testament context, so too he cannot be understood outside of our ecclesial context. This is obviously a eucharistic discourse. By viewing Jesus' words through this ecclesial lens, we see how he can be both symbolic and literal, for here the symbols of bread and wine carry the objective reality with them. In this, the climax of his discourse, Jesus identifies the eucharistic elements with himself.

In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to associate the first part of the discourse (on the 18th Sunday) with the Liturgy of the Word, the second part (19th Sunday) with the sacrifice of the Mass and today's with Communion. A decade after John's Gospel was written, the great bishop and martyr St. Ignatius of Antioch criticized those who "abstain from the Eucharist and prayer, because they refuse to acknowledge that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ." For Ignatius, the Eucharist was "the medicine of immortality, the antidote we take...to live forever in Jesus Christ" (Smy. 6; Eph 20)

Jesus is the bread of life. We feed on his life-giving word of wisdom that we may see as he sees. We feed on his self-offering, from the Incarnation to Calvary, for it brings us to communion with the Father and with one another. And we feed on his flesh and blood that we may be transformed by what we consume. It is difficult to talk about the Eucharist because it represents so many layers of profound truths, each layer heavy in symbol and metaphor. No wonder Jesus' listeners were confused.

I even see confusion in the church today. This is unfortunate, for the profundity of the Eucharist and its transformative possibilities cannot be overplayed. The Second Vatican Council describes the Eucharist elegantly: "A sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us" ("Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," No. 47).

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- At Mass, offer yourself on the altar along with Jesus' eternal offering.
- Pray to see every communicant as part of your own spiritual body.

ART: TAD DUNNE

PETER FELDMEIER *is the Murray/Bacik Chair of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo.*

Making Hard Choices

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), AUG. 26, 2012

Readings: Jos 24:1-18; Ps 34:2-21; Eph 5:21-32; Jn 6:60-69

"Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21)

Jesus lost many disciples as a result of his Bread of Life discourse, which we have been hearing over the last few Sundays. The collective weight of his pronouncements—I am the bread of life; I am the bread that came down from heaven; unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you (Jn 6:35, 41, 53)—was just too much. "As a result," John tells us in today's reading, "many of his disciples…no longer accompanied him." Peter, speaking for the Twelve, assures Jesus that their choice is with him: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Making the hard choice is the issue Joshua puts to the people of God. He calls the elders and asks them who their God will be. "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." The elders assure him their choice is also the Lord. In the text immediately following this reading Joshua challenges them: "You may not be able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy God" (24:19). They commit themselves a second time. Moses had also asked twice (Ex 24:3-7).

One of the hard choices (albeit of a different sort) for pastors is the decision whether to use the full version of the second reading, in which we read, "Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord." The Lectionary allows the omission of this and similar verses.

The issue of submission came up once pastorally as I was asked to adjudicate a marital dispute. A couple had four children in grade school, and the husband discerned God calling the couple to have another. His wife discerned no such thing. He then asked her to submit respectfully to his headship in the family. I told them that he could not extrapolate his discernment to what God's will was for her. "You both need to experience the call for another child as God's will to go forward," I told them. Obviously, I sidestepped the biblical problem.

The issue also came up in class this year. "The problem with feminism," a student announced, "is that it encourages wives to think they don't need to be subordinate to their husbands, which the word of God clearly teaches." This comment led to a handout and discussion during the next class. We looked at today's reading from the Letter to the Ephesians and other texts that say the same. The next part of the handout had even more New Testament citations—supporting slavery. How can you accept one set as a universal, timeless mandate from God and another as a cultural reflection of the era and not God's will? We also looked at a dozen other texts that illustrate the same problem.

Since the time of Pope Pius XII ("Divino Afflante Spiritu"), the Catholic Church has formally taught that one can understand the revelation of Scripture only when one takes account of the cultural assumptions in which it is embedded, with their limitations and biases. One way to separate the revelatory gold from the cultural dross is to see what the inspired authors do with those cultural assumptions. That is, how does God shake things up? Consider how it would be experienced in Paul's day to hear that a wife has authority over her husband's body (1 Cor 7:4), or that husbands should give themselves over to their wives completely as Christ did for the church (Eph 5:25). The greatest shock might come from the first line in today's reading, often overlooked: "Be subordinate to one another." Given the cultural assumptions, the principle of mutuality looks like a divine shake-up indeed.

To me, faithfulness to the word would involve embracing this principle in our current cultural context. Consider Pope John Paul II's statement in "Familiaris Consortio" (No. 22): "Above all it is important to underline the equal dignity and responsibility of women with men. This equality is realized in a unique manner in that reciprocal self-giving by each one to the other."

St. Paul's challenge today: radical, mutual, reciprocal self-giving. This is a hard teaching that calls for hard choices. Can we say yes?

PETER FELDMEIER

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Think of several people who are culturally lowly.
- Imagine the dignity of Christ radiating through them.

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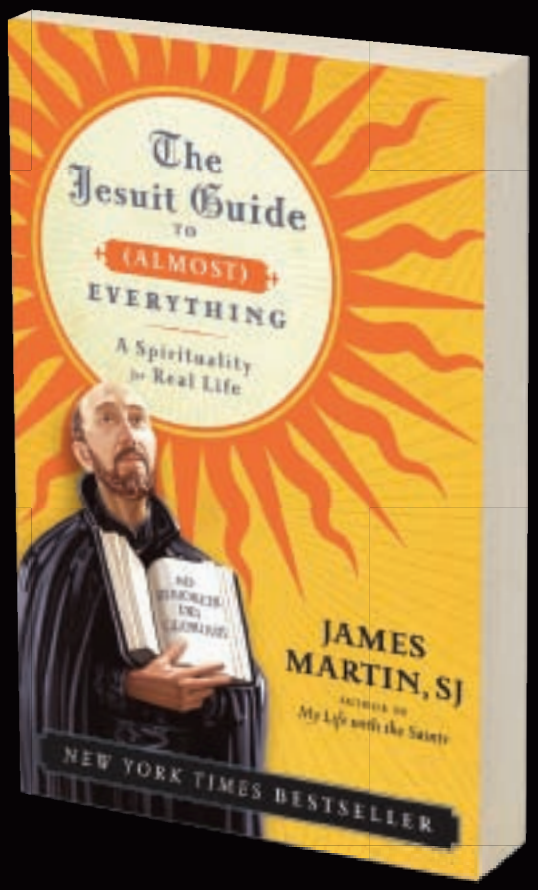

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