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REPORTS FROM CUBA AND EL SALVADOR

KLEIN, TERRANCE KLEIN
ON BOND, JAMES BOND

OF MANY THINGS

If you're wondering why the European Union budget talks collapsed in November, you might look to the euro, the common currency of more than half of the E.U.'s member states, to gain a clue. I don't mean the currency's market position but the actual printed paper. All the euro bank notes display some image of a bridge, arch or gateway, each a highly stylized representation of a European architectural period—so highly stylized, in fact, that the images don't correspond in any straightforward way to actual objects. The bridge on the five euro bank note, for example, might appear to be the Pont du Gard, but look closely and you'll see just enough of a difference to permit an Irishman or a German to claim that the image is not that of the famous bridge in southern France.

The obscurity is by design. If the images don't correspond to anything that anyone really cares about, the logic goes, then the images cannot possibly offend. True enough, but such images can hardly inspire either. The big question, of course, is whether the Great Idea of Europe, symbolized here by some imagined bridge, will enable Europeans to transcend the vast historical and cultural differences among them.

After all, this sort of thing has been tried before. It is a peculiarly modern fantasy that widespread allegiance to a great idea can bring about radical change in human living. "Come, let us reason together," has been the mantra of Westerners from Norman Angell to Francis Fukuyama. The great idea, we're told, can overcome all the legacies of warfare, the most entrenched ideologies, the most parochial of worldviews.

Ideas matter; they matter a lot. But they are hardly salvific. The violence and injustice that have disfigured European history are not the products of rational decision-making. More often, they are simply the products of original sin. The best explanation for Europe's twin 20th-century cataclysms isn't Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* or John F. Kennedy's *Why England Slept*. The best explanation for those conflicts, indeed for all human conflict, is the first six chapters of the Book of Genesis. War-making, precisely because it is a consequence of sin, is irrational. Some work of human reason, then, untethered to faith, is pitifully insufficient to forestall human violence. Here, Christians can help lead the way; for our hope lies not in worldly utopian dreams, but in the saving love of Christ; our communion is revealed and realized anew in the Eucharist, not in the empty symbols and para-liturgies of the nation-state. We are disciples of Jesus Christ, not subjects of Leviathan.

What might a conversion of human hearts look like in the real world? This issue of **America** points to some possibilities. Tim Wadkins reports from postwar El Salvador, where the church is learning anew that lasting political change must begin with spiritual conversion. Margaret E. Crahan writes about how the church in Cuba, a country long oppressed by its own version of a great idea, is finding creative ways to fill the immense social and cultural vacuum created by the regime's official atheism. Last, Ivan J. Kauffman argues that a truly Catholic approach to politics must eschew ideology entirely and that "American democracy will not survive unless we find new post-ideological ways" to solve our problems. Individual conversion, ecclesial renewal, post-ideological politics: not a bad start.

By the way, the European Central Bank has chosen a new image for the euro that will debut next year: Europa, the Phoenician woman after whom the continent takes its name. A seemingly safe pick. If Greece decides to withdraw from the euro zone, however, then having a Greek mythological figure on the currency could prove problematic. The E.U. bankers in Frankfurt would have to go back to the beginning.

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ON THE WEB

Margaret E. Crahan, right, talks on our podcast about her **visits to Cuba.** Plus, Daniel Callahan on **controlling health care costs**, and a video report by CNS on new rights for **children in Ireland**. All at americamagazine.org.

Digging Deeper

As a corporate entity forced to accept responsibility for one of history's worst industrial accidents, BP, the British oil company, will be digging deep over the next few years to pay off the Deepwater Hori-zon disaster, the oil rig blowout in April 2010 that claimed the lives of 11 men and flooded the Gulf of Mexico with an unmeasureable volume of crude oil and methane gas.

BP has accepted a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice, pleading guilty to 14 criminal counts and agreeing to $4.5 billion in fines and other payments. U.S. attorneys also threw in a handful of further indictments against lower-ranking BP employees. Announcing the indictments, Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said, "I hope that this sends a clear message to those who would engage in this kind of reckless and wanton conduct."

It is a welcome step to hold corporate officers personally responsible for such "accidents." Unfortunately, the message Mr. Holder may be sending is that the people at the corporate top, who drive the decision-making at the bottom, have nothing to fear as long as they dirty their hands only with paperwork. It is true that Deepwater Horizon exploded late in the night on April 20, 2010, but the decisions that set the disaster in motion happened months earlier and at a much higher corporate plane than a few white collars on the rig itself.

The settlement will certainly crimp BP profits for a few years, but it continues a trend of hefty fines willingly paid because they have the net effect of terminating investigations that might tease out the truly responsible parties. The people who live along the Gulf of Mexico whose lives were so disrupted by the blowout and the families of the men who died on Deepwater Horizon deserve a complete and thorough prosecution. All parties must be held accountable for their actions and judgment. A payout that once again obscures corporate negligence is not enough.

Don't Call Me a Saint?

In November the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops enthusiastically supported the canonization of Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement. Thanks to changes in the Vatican's canonization procedures, the bishop in charge of promoting a person for sainthood must bring the matter before the regional bishops' conference. In this case the job fell to Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, archbishop of New York, where Day's ministry was based.

But some of her most ardent admirers may not be as enthusiastic. The reason is one of Day's most famous sayings: "Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed that easily." Some feel that supporting her canonization is almost a betrayal of her wishes. But Dorothy Day's statement more likely relates to her desire to be taken seriously in her own lifetime than to any antipathy toward the saints or the saint-making process. Robert Ellsberg, the editor of her journals and letters, wrote on **America**'s blog In All Things that Dorothy was devoted to the saints, and that he is in favor of her canonization. "What Dorothy certainly opposed…was being put on a pedestal, fitted to some pre-fab conception of holiness that would strip her of her humanity and…dismiss the radical challenge of the Gospel." Was he worried that canonization would smooth the rough edges of a woman who favored pacifism, refused to pay taxes and expressed disdain for the free-market capitalist system? No, said Ellsberg. "There are those who might try to fit her into a conventional mold. But I don't think she will allow herself to be dismissed that easily."

Occupy in Action

From its beginning, Occupy Wall Street has sought to embody a truly democratic community while also responding to people's basic needs. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Occupy has been able to coordinate an effective relief effort—hot meals, water, medicine and blankets—because of an internal culture that quickly turns volunteers into organizers and expands its reach. The movement has also worked closely with local churches. "Nearly every major distribution site is a church," said Nathan Schneider, of Occupy Catholics. "This movement is recognizing the vital role religion can and must play in transformation in this society, both in terms of politics and the imagination."

In addition to the relief effort, this religious imagination has also helped Occupy develop creative responses to the larger economic problems that plague the country. The Rolling Jubilee campaign, launched on Nov. 15, raises money to buy defaulted debt at pennies on the dollar and then abolishes the debt—drawing from the Jubilee tradition in the Hebrew Scriptures. Tim Worstall, a contributor to Forbes, called it an idea "we can all get behind."

Lending money, like building a budget, is a matter of moral concern. This is why Occupy Catholics and other faith-based groups seek to increase the usage of the terms *jubilee* and *usury* in conversations about economics. "The cruelest features of our economic system" need to "be seen for the sins that they really are," explained Occupy Catholics. As Occupy Wall Street enters its second year, it is evident that the movement has staying power and is growing in relevance and effectiveness in addressing the nation's economic woes.

Syria's Late Spring

According to the Syrian novelist Dima Wannous, the seed of Syria's Arab Spring revolt was planted in Damascus in February 2011. A policeman insulted a shop owner, and a crowd of young workers and traders formed chanting, "The Syrian people cannot be humiliated." The interior minister arrived to scold the crowd: "Shame on you. This is a demonstration!" He had no idea, says Wannous, that "demonstration would become revolution." As a result, Syria, once ruled by a clique, is faced with a demand for a free society.

In the 21 months of conflict, Syria has not followed the pattern of the Arab Spring, replacing a dictator with incipient structures of democracy. President Bashar al-Assad has repeated the policy of his father, Hafez al-Assad, who in 1982 crushed a Sunni insurgency by destroying the city of Hama.

The statistics shock. An estimated 40,000 people have died. At least 2.5 million Syrians are displaced and a half million have fled into neighboring countries. The shelling of cities has rendered 1.5 million homeless. The government imagines this will make the people submit.

Proposed solutions extend from greater use of force—arm the opposition, assist it with air support or create no-fly zones—to more intensive diplomacy. The justification for outside intervention has several sources: the United Nations itself; Catholic just war theory shared by secular governments; the emerging principle of the responsibility to protect.

The opposition has been divided. The Syrian National Council, which includes the Muslim Brotherhood, is headquartered in Istanbul. Disparate rebel groups receive help from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Salafis, extreme Sunni Muslims, belong to several rebel groups. Western powers, especially the United States, remain hesitant to better equip the resistance, aware that advanced weapons might ultimately fall into the hands of extremists. The Italian Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio, which has a history of peacemaking, met in July in Rome with opposition Islamists, leftists, secular democrats and Kurds. They have called upon the Free Syrian Army to rethink its strategy and return to the pursuit of a political solution to the conflict.

A military intervention, even one embraced multilaterally, seems hard to rationalize according to just war principles: noncombatants will surely be endangered; even greater disorder threatens; and a successful outcome is hard to perceive. Though the death toll now seems horrific, President Assad has promised to deploy chemical weapons should an international coalition appear to join sides with the Free Syrian Army.

This does not mean, however, that the international community can reside on the sidelines of the horror. Not intervening similarly offers a litany of potential noxious outcomes. Under the doctrine of responsibililty to protect, in fact, the international community has a moral obligation to respond when sovereign entities exhibit such a complete disregard for the lives and well-being of their own people. How then to proceed?

In a statement in July, the Syrians who convened with Sant'Egidio in Rome declared: "We cannot accept Syria being transformed into a theatre of regional and international conflict. We believe the international community has the strength and the necessary ability to find a consensus that would be the basis of a political solution... a real global negotiation that excludes no one and a process that would be completed with real national reconciliation based on justice." These are nonviolent words worth hearing as the Syrian civil war hangs in bloody irresolution, seemingly on the verge, as winter approaches, of spiraling into something even worse.

In the gloom of this war, even with the option of direct military intervention properly off the table, there remain opportunities for active interventions by the United States and other global powers, particularly Syria's patron, Russia, that can even at this late moment snatch a diplomatic victory from the jaws of this ongoing defeat for humanity. With the right pressure, creative proposals and determined, persistent diplomacy, President Assad may still be made to see reason and assent to a cease-fire that can reboot a process toward a political settlement that could establish the foundation of a long-term regional peace.

All options should remain open, including allowing Assad to remain, albeit in an altered capacity, and even proposals that consider redrawing the colonial boundaries of Syria to better represent the Alawite and Sunni, Christian and Kurd populations. The peacemakers must use every means to convince President Assad and the members of the international community, who are now ready to throw up their hands in frustration, that the whole world loses if Syria dies.

GAZA STRIP

Praying for Peace on Both Sides of the Border

"When we pray for peace, we pray for peace for everyone," said the Rev. Yoel Salvaterra, who serves the Catholic community in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba, after a morning in which more than 20 rockets fired from the Gaza Strip landed in the city. "Our prayers have no borders. We know we are suffering here and they are suffering there. It is just suffering."

The parish celebrated Mass on Nov. 18 in the church bomb shelter, Father Salvaterra said, and only 15 people came to pray, about half the normal number. The community has about 150 members. "People live in fear," he said. "Everybody is staying home."

In Gaza, George Antone, 31, project manager for the Pontifical Mission for Palestine and father of a 6-month-old daughter, said that residents remained inside their homes because it was too risky to leave. No one knew where Israeli bombs might land next, he said.

"It can be anywhere, between houses, in government institutions, schools, universities, a football field," he said. "The situation here is terrible. Last night it was as if we were living in hell. Every 15 minutes you could hear an explosion."

On Nov. 19 Sami El-Yousef, regional director for the Catholic Near East Welfare Association's office in Jerusalem, reported widespread destruction in Gaza and said almost all Christian institutions had sustained some damage. He said children and the elderly were paying the heaviest price.

Pope Benedict XVI condemned the escalating hostilities on Nov. 21 and called for greater efforts to promote a truce and peace negotiations. "Hatred and violence are not the solution to problems," he said. That morning a cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas was finally reached. The pope called on leaders on both sides to make "courageous decisions in favor of peace and put an end to a conflict that has negative repercussions throughout the entire Middle East region, which is already troubled by too many conflicts and is in need of peace and reconciliation." During Israel's aerial offensive over the Gaza Strip to neutralize rocket attacks, 169 Palestinians and at least six Israelis were killed.

One member of Antone's Holy Family Parish in Gaza died of a heart attack during a bombing. "I don't like the killing on either side," he said. "I respect life.

"This is not the way in which we can find a solution. Peace never comes with blood. That is what we say to the people in church. This will lead to nothing—only a very bad scenario on both sides—and the people will pay the price."

"Unless both sides are willing to take difficult decisions," the stand-off will continue like this, El-Yousef said. "The cycle [of violence] gets worse and worse. This is going nowhere and just creating more hatred." He said he hopes that new leaders in the Middle East will play a positive role in calming things down so that a lasting solution can be found. "What we have now is conflict management rather than resolution," he said.

Antone sees the conflict between Hamas and the Israelis as not only political but also stemming from religious fanaticism on the part of both Muslims and Jews. "We Christians are not political; we call for peace and to save lives," Antone said. After the truce, "they have to start negotiating for peace. That is the only way to solve the problem. They have to sit and speak and find a way where there will be no war for our children and the coming generations."

Another Catholic Gazan, who asked not to be identified, said he and his family had not left their home for almost a week. "The explosions are terrible for us," he said.

Though some people may disagree with Hamas's tactics, "nobody can say anything against Hamas," he said. "They are in control."

Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Nov. 19

BOSTON

New Plan to Reverse Decline?

A pastoral plan approved by Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston calls for the archdiocese to organize its 288 parishes into approximately 135 groups, to be called parish collaboratives. Led by one pastor, a pastoral team of priests, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers will provide pastoral services to all the parishes in the collaborative group. Each parish will maintain its separate identity and retain control of its own property and assets.

Cardinal O'Malley said the new pastoral plan comes in response to current challenges faced by the Catholic Church in Boston and could change if circumstances improve. The diocese has struggled with a variety of fiscal and structural dilemmas. "The plan to implement a new model of leadership at the collaboratives does not mean that we are leaving behind the model of a priest being assigned as the pastor of one parish," he said. "It is my fervent hope, encouraged by a significant increase in seminary enrollment during recent years, that a greater number of ordinations to the priesthood will allow us to again assign priests as pastors of individual parishes."

Called "Disciples in Mission," the plan identified parishes' main challenges: declining Mass attendance, shrinking numbers of priests and trained laity and an increasing number of parishes unable to sustain themselves financially. Cardinal O'Malley approved the plan on Nov. 15.

The shift marks the latest major change for 1.8 million Catholics in and around Boston, who have already endured 69 parish closures in the wake of the crisis caused by sexual abuse by members of the clergy. The plan was seen as an acknowledgment that such parish closings are no longer an acceptable option. "We are at a crossroads," Cardinal O'Malley said at a press conference. "Mass attendance and participation in parish life has declined over the past two generations." Currently about 16 percent of Boston Catholics regularly attend Mass, and four of 10 parishes cannot pay their bills.

"Thank God they're not closing any more parishes," said Thomas Groome, chair of the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College. "But it's really like rearranging chairs on the deck of the Titanic. They're postponing the inevitable." Groome said it was becoming "dreadfully irresponsible" of the church to not "honestly face the reality of the priest shortage." He added, "The priesthood is not going in revive in great numbers until we open it up at least to married men."

At the press conference on Nov. 15, Cardinal O'Malley said, "Though the challenge of renewing the church will call for significant effort and a new way of staffing our parishes, we are committed to re-engaging the culture, the current generation of Catholics and providing a strong foundation for those who will follow us."

The cardinal added, "Our Catholic faith is our most precious gift.... Parishes are the heart of the new evangelization; they must be well staffed and financially sound so as to be effective in this mission."

The new collaboratives will usually be made up of two or three parishes. Each collaborative, the plan says, is a means for fostering common pastoral action and a common vision, not a structure "above" the parish or coming between the parish and the diocesan bishop. The collaboratives will take shape in four phases over the course of five years.

The archdiocese has not determined all the collaborative groupings yet, according to the Rev. Paul Soper, interim director of the Office of Pastoral Planning. That first phase will involve about a dozen collaboratives. Their experiences will be studied to hone the process as the implementation continues.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley meets the press.

Do No Harm

Congress should avoid measures that harm at-risk students, low-income families and the global poor who benefit from international assistance, said Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., and Bishop Richard E. Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, in a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate on Nov. 13. The bishops oversee the justice and peace efforts of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "As you work to avoid sequestration and enact responsible deficit reduction…we hope longstanding moral principles and values will inform your decisions," they wrote. The bishops said Pope Benedict XVI warns against "downsizing of social security systems" and emphasizes "solidarity with poor countries" and asked Congress to weigh the "human and moral consequences" of numerous policy choices. The bishops said the "important goal" of long-term deficit control "must not be achieved at the expense of the dignity of poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad."

The Social Church

Around 62 percent of adult U.S. Catholics have a profile on Facebook; 58 percent of Catholics 30 and under share pictures, articles and comments at least once a week; and nearly a third say they would like their pastors and bishops to use blogs. Those are some results of a study released by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. The study, "Catholic New Media Use in the United States, 2012," was released on Nov. 11 in conjunction with the U.S. bishops' annual Fall General Assembly in Baltimore. The report "suggests many opportunities for the church to engage with those who live on the 'digital continent,' as Pope Benedict XVI describes this new culture of communication," said Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Communications. In fact, more than half the survey's respondents said they were unaware of any significant presence of the church on social media.

U.S. BISHOPS' MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

During the public sessions, on Nov. 12–13, of the annual **Fall General Assembly** of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore, among other actions, the bishops: ⬩ Approved their first **document on preaching** in 30 years, "Preaching the Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily," encouraging preachers to connect the Sunday homily with people's daily lives ⬩ Rejected a fast-tracked statement intended to offer support and hope to people who are suffering because of the **economic downturn** ⬩ Approved an exhortation encouraging Catholics to take advantage of the **sacrament of penance** ⬩ Endorsed the cause for canonization of **Dorothy Day**, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement ⬩ Agreed to begin a revision of the **Liturgy of the Hours**—updating hymns, psalms, various canticles, psalm prayers, some antiphons, biblical readings and other components of the liturgical prayers used at various parts of the day ⬩ Approved the hiring of a **public affairs director** as efforts begin to reorganize the conference's Communications Department ⬩ Approved a budget for 2013 of $220.4 million ⬩ Agreed to hold a **national collection** for the Archdiocese for the Military Services ⬩ Participated in a pre-meeting workshop on **social media.**

Congo Escalation

Rwandan-backed M23 rebels took control on Nov. 20 of Goma, the capital of North Kivu Province, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Amnesty International called on all sides of the escalating conflict to take steps to safeguard civilians. Thousands fled the besieged city and rapes have been reported as rebels promised to advance on Bukavu and ultimately Kinshasa, determined to depose Congo's president, Joseph Kabila. A missionary source in Goma reports, "The population feels betrayed and abandoned by the government" and the U.N. mission forces. U.N. forces did not intervene after government troops fled or turned over their weapons to the rebels. The humanitarian and security situation has deteriorated dramatically since fighting between M23 and the Congolese army resumed on Nov. 15. Since the M23 was created in April 2012, Amnesty International has documented numerous human rights abuses attributed to its fighters, including unlawful killings, forced recruitment of children and young adults and rape.

From CNS and other sources.

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE

Right Relationship

You never know what you're going to get during the dinner table family roundup of the day's events. Our kindergartner recently told us: "The king and queen of England used to be really mean. They made everybody go to one church. They wouldn't let people go to other churches. It got really crowded in there. People were really smooshed. So people came to America to get out of that one church and to have other churches." Except for conflating a religious community with a physical building, he concisely described much of the drive for religious freedom at America's founding.

Our third grader is captivated by all things Native American, particularly our newest saint, Kateri Tekakwitha, patroness of ecology and nature. But she bristles at the injustices St. Kateri suffered, rejected by many of her Native American contemporaries yet also wronged by the Christian colonizers, who eventually took away Algonquin and Mohawk tribal lands.

Our pre-schooler is not interested in either conversation. She is hungry and concerned that we've run out of macaroni and cheese. She is drawing out the few remaining bites, putting a tubular noodle around each tine of the fork. "What are you doing?" I ask sharply. She doesn't like the cold turn the weather has taken and informs me, "I'm giving the fork slippers."

Our family dinner table is much like the dinner table of our church. Some are concerned with religious freedom. Others are animated by social injustices. Others are hungry and cold and just trying to stretch out the last box of macaroni and cheese. None of them are wrong; all are being honest about their concerns; and all are children of God.

How do we navigate these fault lines, overcome the sharpness and divisions and come together as one family around the table?

Our president talks often of "the difficult, frustrating and necessary work of self-government." He rightly points out that our government is not some external monster to be slain. Our government is us—each teacher, tax collector and vote counter, all of us neighbors and citizens working together to build a good community.

> We must bridge the gap of sharp words and frayed bonds.

The same is true of our church. We are more than the priests and bishops sentenced in court rooms because of sexual misconduct and more than the Nuns on a Bus. We are mothers and teachers, nurses and preachers, all working to be signs and wonders, witnesses and practitioners of God's love on earth.

We know how to bridge the gap of sharp words and frayed bonds. We need to apply the practices of Catholic peacebuilding here at home, practices of reconciliation and participation. Principles and practices of Catholic peacebuilding have been learned at great cost in conflicts around the world, from the Philippines to Colombia. Ideas prominent in Catholic peacebuilding—participation, reconciliation, right relationship and a long-term time horizon—stem from the principle of the sanctity of human life and dignity. To build peace, we have to be able, as John Paul Lederach, a scholar of peacebuildng at the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame, notes, "to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies."

Emmanuel Ntakarutimana, O.P., a Catholic peacebuilder who is the chairman of the Burundi Human Rights Commission, lectured at Catholic University recently and asked why Americans believe peacebuilding applies abroad but not here at home. Peacebuilding can help bring together a country and church divided. The Catholic moral and religious imagination, our sacraments of Communion and reconciliation, offer many ways to rebuild bonds in divided communities.

We have miles of practical experience in peacebuilding, practiced at every family and holiday dinner we have ever shared. We don't talk and judge too much. We listen with love. We don't shout or vilify, look for or savor fault, hoard the goodies or walk away. We speak with kindness and respect, even when we don't feel like it. We hold each other's hands and hurts, pray together and always serve the least ones first.

Peace on earth may not descend instantly, but we follow the hymn's direction and repeat, repeat, repeat. And in this simple breaking of the bread, we are transformed.

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE *serves on the advisory board of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network.*

The International Baptist Mission, El Salvador

The Postwar Path

A new spirit is alive in El Salvador.

BY TIMOTHY WADKINS

El Salvador is not your typical tourist destination. It has been wracked by earthquakes and frequently finds itself in the way of devastating hurricanes. It is also the smallest, most densely populated and most violent nation in all of Latin America. So why have so many North American Christians made it a major place of spiritual pilgrimage?

Many come to evangelize. Others come to build houses and volunteer in orphanages. But most come because they feel drawn to meditate on the vicious oppression and violence of the civil war that ended here in 1992. In particular, they come to visit the "church of the martyrs" created by the war. This "congregation" includes Rutilio Grande, S.J. (d. 1977), Archbishop Oscar Romero (1980), six Jesuits slain at the University of Central America in 1989, four American churchwomen murdered on a lonely airport

PHOTO: TABERNÁCULO BIBLICO BAUTISTA AMIGOS DE ISRAEL CENTRAL

TIMOTHY WADKINS *is a professor of historical theology at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y.*

road the same year and thousands of *campesinos* killed by government death squads and U.S. bombs.

Each year thousands of North American parish groups and university students make the trip south, where they are exposed to the realities of the war and to the ideas of liberation theology, particularly its emphasis on the "preferential option for the poor." They are also exposed to the possibility of building solidarity with those still marginalized Salvadorans whose postwar daily life is threatened by gang violence, suffocating poverty and systemic exploitation by transnational corporations and the neoliberal policies of the government.

Given the gut-wrenching experiences that accompany such pilgrimages, these visitors might be perplexed, even disturbed to learn that despite popular assumptions about Roman Catholic hegemony in El Salvador and efforts by radical solidarity groups to mobilize the poor to struggle for their rights, younger generations of the nation's poor, with few war memories, have different preferences. In ways that do not fit with liberationist expectations, they are less interested in political organizing; they are opting out of their traditional moorings in Catholicism; and, most significant, they are rapidly moving toward the altars of evangelical conversion and Pentecostal experience. A multifaceted, wildly enthusiastic revival of religion has erupted in El Salvador that has altered the religious demographics of this traditionally Catholic country and may point to larger cultural changes.

A revival of religion in El Salvador has altered the religious demographics of this traditionally Catholic country.

Pentecostal Spring

In greater San Salvador alone there are now over a dozen Pentecostal churches, each with attendance figures of more than 2,000. One of the largest is the Tabernaculo Biblico Bautista "Amigos de Israel Central." Founded by the U.S.-educated Dr. Edgar Lopez Bertrand, better known as Brother Toby, the Baptist tabernacle boasts a membership of over 80,000 and has spawned over 400 smaller, loosely affiliated churches throughout the world.

Even larger is the Mision Elim Cristiani, located in the very poor city of Ilapongo just outside metropolitan San Salvador. Unlike the more middle class and theologically relaxed Tabernaculo, Elim is a church of the very poor. Elim has 80 full-time pastors, two radio stations, one television station and over 10,000 cell groups that meet weekly. Its 12 weekly celebrations in a 10,000 seat sanctuary are serious events, animated by fiery preaching, open weeping, speaking in tongues and healings. In addition to these massive churches, even greater numbers of Salvadoran evangelicals and Pentecostals belong to one of the thousands of very small congregations of less than 100 members.

The latest national poll, taken in 2009 by the Instituto Universitario de Opinion Publica and Canisius College's Institute for the Global Study of Religion, reveals that over the past two decades the proportion of the Salvadoran population identifying as Protestant more than doubled, increasing to nearly 40 percent from just over 15 percent. Overwhelmingly the members of this growing demographic identify themselves as Pentecostal or charismatic. Meanwhile, Roman Catholic identification dropped to just over 50 percent of the population, and only 40 percent of this group claims to attend Mass with any regularity. This means that active Catholic participation is hovering at 25 to 30 percent of the population. Such a decline is momentous, but it is also significant that within this Catholic remnant, a similar kind of Pentecostal resurgence is taking place.

El Salvador's Renovación Catolica is the fastest growing sector in the church and now represents just under 20 percent of the active Catholic population. These Catholic charismatics are also difficult to differentiate from Protestant Pentecostals. Their worship is lively; their music is contemporary and repetitive; they speak in tongues and practice faith healing; and they are open to many different kinds of charismatic expression. Most of all, they are nurtured within egalitarian, lay-led charismatic communities.

What are we to think about all this? Most leaders in the solidarity movement filter out this resurgence altogether or denounce it as an irrational escape from impoverishment or a thinly veiled version of American consumerism. A sociologist at the Central American University in San Salvador summed up the general response from the left when he remarked that evangelicals "look up—to heaven and to the North." Such dismissals, however, fail to appreciate that since the days of the Spanish conquest, Christianity has always been a cultural import. The important internal dynamics of this resurgence are also underappreciated. Beneath the layers of loud, pulsating music, evangelistic preaching and boisterous worship, there is a decidedly modern mentality at work that resonates with the cultural dynamics of postwar El Salvador.

Entrepreneurial Spirit?

This movement's central animating feature is individual empowerment. Pentecostals emphasize the power of God that is unmediated and directly accessible to each believer

through the grace of Christ, a biblical blueprint for moral living and, especially, the personal indwelling and enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Converts and participants perceive themselves to have new identities as autonomous children of God, to be equally empowered with other believers and to have unlimited access to the sacred source of holiness.

In such congregations the church becomes less a sacred institution that dispenses salvation and more a fellowship of equals who congregate in democratic social spaces. Protestants, of course, take individual agency and equality for granted and because of this proliferate into ever new congregational expressions. But this emphasis on the "priesthood of all believers" has created tensions within Catholic parishes. Most members of the Renovación movement frequent Mass, venerate Mary and the saints and are respectful of hierarchical authority. But there is a pervasive sense that their real home is in the fellowship of the charismatic community, which often has its own facility and attracts more participants than the parish Masses. Similar to what is taking place within the global Catholic charismatic movement, such autonomy has generated urgent calls for the hierarchy to scrutinize the movement and make it more Catholic.

The individualism that runs through this movement might be equipping participants for existence in a pluralist, industrialized, more democratic society, which, despite continuing social problems, increasingly describes modern El Salvador. A recent Salvadoran television advertiser declares that its product helps people "find what they wanted when they wanted it most." Evangelical leaders in El Salvador are creative entrepreneurs. They are constantly finding new and different ways to bring Christ to increasingly urban and mobile people who, like consumers everywhere in the market economies of the modern world, want to pick and choose what they need most, when they need it most. As a result, such individualism and spiritual immediacy has spawned great variety within the Salvadoran religious marketplace, including a few more affluent congregations that are characterized by extreme emotionalism and a consumerist orientation.

While these congregations certainly feed negative stereotypes about Pentecostals, the movement as a whole is not typically otherworldly nor economically pretentious. Although their economic profile is rising, most charismatics and Pentecostals in El Salvador are still quite poor. Their lives are narratives of tremendous economic hardship, disintegrated family structures, drug addiction, gang involvement and failed attempts at migration. But their conversion stories, which are remarkably similar across both Catholic and Protestant traditions, are narratives of personal restoration that touch every aspect of life—physical healing, restoration of personal dignity, a new optimism about the future, new attitudes about personal morality and church or Mass

attendance. The net effect of such dramatic turnarounds is fundamentally social. Pentecostal and charismatic converts re-enter the world as new people with different values about sobriety, family roles and financial discipline.

Back to Basics

There is also evidence that what begins in personal regeneration may evolve into an emphasis on social transformation. A growing number of Pentecostal leaders and congregations have become critical of the exclusive Pentecostal emphasis on inward piety and are now deeply engaged with the problematic social realities of El Salvador. One of these leaders is Pastor Carlos Rivas, a former Catholic seminarian and fiery pastor of the Tabernáculo Aviviamento Internacional, who spares no words in his critique of Salvadoran society and corrupt politics. After he broke from the Catholic Church in his teens, Pastor Rivas became an associate pastor at the huge megachurch Tabernaculo Biblico Bautista. But he left the Tabernaculo because it, as he put it, "consistently ignored the poor and were completely wedded to the power and privileges they were provided by the conservative Arena party." Pastor Rivas is not alone.

ON THE WEB
Daniel Callahan on controlling healthcare costs.
americamagazine.org

Mario Vega, the Jesuit-educated pastor general of the huge Mision Elim church, says that he and many of his staff are beginning to address structural evil in the country. Pastor Vega explained, "It is not enough just to preach the Gospel, place gang leaders in jail or even give aid to the poor.... We must speak out against and attempt to change those underlying conditions that cause poverty and violence."

In recent radio broadcasts, newspaper advertisements and public protests, Elim has denounced policies that are contributing to gang violence and poverty. In addition, the church is now engaged in job-training programs, promoting recycling as a form of Christian concern for the environment and, at the risk of severe criticism, testing for H.I.V.

This nod toward social ministry has been rapidly growing among Pentecostals, and it represents a maturing of the movement. Many congregations and nongovernmental organizations are at the cutting edge of creative social engagement: developing community projects focused on sustainable agriculture and water quality, investing in education and jobs in order to neutralize gang violence and petitioning local government for better schools and infrastructure development. Pentecostals often use the term *misión integral* when describing their social praxis. This is a concept that developed from the writings of René Padilla, an Argentinian theologian. It is being taught throughout Latin America by the edgy, socially oriented evangelical organization known as the Latin American Theological Fraternity. Integral ministry emphasizes personal conversion and spiritual formation in the faith. This is combined with biblical ideas about God's incarnational intention of not leaving any human and any corner of the earth untouched by God's love and justice, thus integrating every aspect of life into the redemptive message of good news.

Such social orientations are reminiscent of the goals of liberation theology and the radical small groups known as *comunidades eclesiales de base*. But there is also a decidedly different emphasis. A former member of a base community, now a leader in the charismatic group at the Catholic parish in San Martin, told me that the base communities "became so politicized they forgot about the life-changing importance of spiritual renewal." He conducts Bible studies and is helping his charismatic group to organize medical care and educational opportunities for children within his community.

In terms of sheer numbers, it is clear that the Pentecostal movement is already the option of the poor. In terms of mobilizing the poor to work to change their situations, this movement's emphasis on spiritual renewal and formation may yet help to fulfill the social agenda under-realized by the *comunidades de base* or liberation theology. As for those North Americans who come south to visit the martyrs and accompany the poor—they would be advised to follow the poor to their churches. They might see where the Spirit is leading in El Salvador. A

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Back From the Margins

The re-emergence of the Cuban Catholic Church

BY MARGARET E. CRAHAN

The visit to Cuba last March by Pope Benedict XVI focused attention on the emergence of the Catholic Church as an influential actor in that island nation. If, by comparison, the 1998 visit of Pope John Paul II was heralded as a watershed in church-state relations in Cuba, the more recent visit reflected the increasing influence of the church at a crucial time in the country's history.

A nominally Catholic country, Cuba historically has been religiously diverse, with low levels of practice and high levels of syncretism. From the 16th century to the 1959 revolution, mostly Spaniards staffed the Catholic Church in Cuba, with priests and religious concentrated in educational institutions in urban areas. Wide swaths of the island were relatively unchurched. A survey in 1957 of 400 rural families by Agrupación Católica revealed that only 52 percent identified themselves as Catholic and 53 percent of the Catholics had never laid eyes on a priest. A very high percentage (41 percent) of the families surveyed claimed to have no religion, while 3 percent identified themselves as Protestants. Both Catholics and Protestants traditionally had low levels of practice, ranging from 3 percent to 4 percent for the former and 5 percent to 6 percent for the latter, ratios that still hold true today. Surveys in the 1990s, however, revealed that over 80 percent of Cubans believed in the divine, although not necessarily in Jesus, Yahweh or Shango. In short, Cuba is a nation of believers, if not of churchgoers.

Cuba emerged early in the Spanish colonial period as a commercial entrepôt that saw a continual flow of individuals not only from Europe and Africa, but also from the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. While commercially important as a rendezvous point for the Spanish fleets, it never developed as a colony to the same extent as the Viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru. Indeed, it was not until the emergence of Cuba as a major sugar producer in the 19th century that Spain paid much attention to the island. As a consequence, Cuba enjoyed more autonomy than many of the other colonies.

In the early 19th century, as both the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church attempted to exercise more control over the somewhat unruly island, political, economic and ecclesial conflicts heightened. These were reflected in the writings of the Rev. Félix Varela (d. 1853), who called for independence, democracy and human rights. The influx of clerics from the newly independent Spanish colonies, as well as Haiti, deepened tensions and strengthened the anti-independence image of the institutional church. The upsurge in the importation of slaves from Africa from the late 18th through the mid-19th century fed not only the independence armies of 1868-78 and 1895-98, but disseminated African religious beliefs widely. These became merged with Catholic beliefs, as well as the spiritism of Allan Kardec (d. 1869) from Europe. The result was widespread syncretism, together with flexibility and adaptability of religious beliefs and practices, and limited denominational and institutional loyalty.

A Diversity of Faiths

The onslaught of Protestant missionaries in the early 20th century helped reinforce religious diversity. This was also a period of heavy immigration from Spain, Eastern Europe, Russia and the Ukraine, which spread secularism, Protestantism and Judaism. By the 1950s Cuba, an ostensibly Catholic country, was religiously diverse and selective in terms of practice. Popular religiosity focused on devotion to the Virgin of Charity of Cobre, the patroness of Cuba, who was also identified with the African spirit Oshun. Today surveys suggest that well over half of Cubans engage in informal religious practices, but only a handful attend services regularly. It is not surprising that when the Castro revolution triumphed in 1959, institutional religions did not serve as a major impediment to the consolidation of a Communist state. Nevertheless, in 1959-60 the Catholic Church, still heavily Spanish in personnel, initially served as an institutional base for some anti-Castro movements, which quickly petered out as more and more of the laity, clergy and religious left the country.

Approximately 85 percent of Catholic personnel departed; all of the Episcopalian clergy left; the Methodists and Presbyterians lost virtually all their ministers. Only the Baptists in the eastern part of the island retained a good portion of their clergy, which helped them survive and grow. The bulk (90 percent) of the Jewish community left. Since the 1980s, however, virtually all the historical religions in

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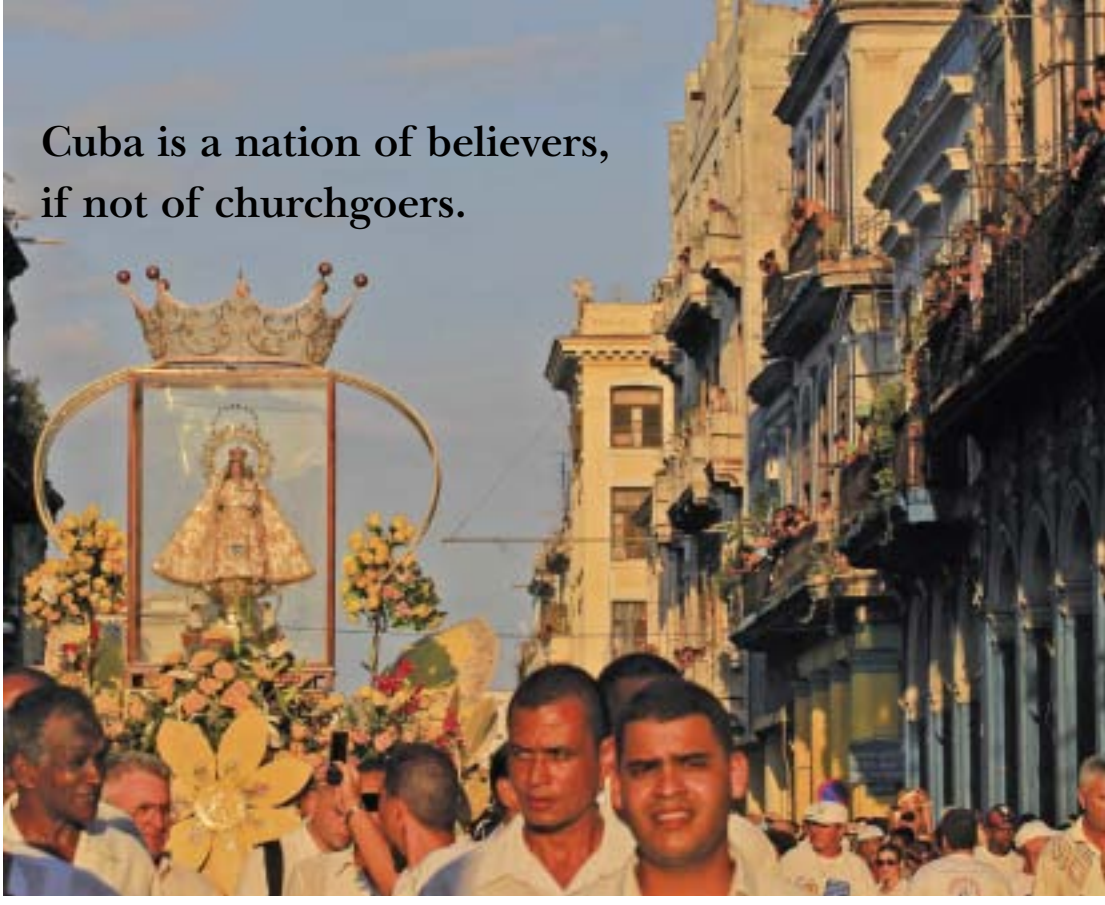
Cuba have experienced a resurgence. In recent years new groups have emerged, including Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals. Seminarians frequently come from nonreligious families. Interviews with them have found that many hunger for a belief system other than materialist atheism. In the early 1990s the Cuban constitution was changed to eliminate atheism as the official position. Today the Cuban state is described as secular, and the Communist Party admits believers to its ranks.



The feast of Our Lady of Charity of Cobre, patroness of Cuba, in Havana

The exodus of religious personnel in the early 1960s and official discrimination against individuals "who made religion a way of life" stripped the institutional churches of much of their capacity to maintain their activities. Some church members, including the current cardinal of Havana, Jaime Ortega Alamino, were interned in the Military Units to Aid Production. Many congregations became refuges for the disaffected. Protestant and Catholic schools, where many of the revolutionary elite had been educated, including the Castros, were shuttered for lack of personnel. Education was secularized. Most Catholic publications ceased, and religions retreated to the margins of Cuban society. In 1968 and 1969 the Catholic Church began a process of rapprochement with the state, issuing pastoral letters criticizing the U.S. embargo of Cuba and urging the faithful to cooperate with government programs conducive to the common good, particularly those related to education and health care. Some Catholics, including youth activists, were alienated, feeling that the church should take a more critical stance.

In the early 1970s Fidel Castro issued a number of statements noting that there were no major impediments to church-state cooperation. Influenced somewhat by the spread of progressive elements within the Catholic and Protestant churches in other Latin American countries, as well as pragmatism, the Cuban government slowly began to reduce the antireligious orientation of the revolution. The process was slow, but it gained speed as the government, which based its legitimacy upon meeting the basic needs of all Cubans, increasingly failed to do so, particularly after Soviet economic aid stopped in 1990-91.

In the 1980s the Catholic Church engaged in a nationwide series of reflections at the parish and diocesan levels that culminated in the National Cuban Church Encounter (ENEC) in 1986. The process was stimulated by an increasing sense that the church had to speak out about moral decay and the abandonment of traditional values, as well as socioeconomic problems. Among the meeting's conclusions was that the church had failed to identify strongly with the people's struggle for social justice in the pre-1959 period and had identified too strongly with counterrevolutionary stances after 1959. ENEC urged Catholics to promote peace, disarmament, sustainable development, a new international economic and social order and increased East-West understanding. The objective was to make clear to Cubans the relevance of the Scriptures to global and Cuban realities. In the aftermath of the cold war and the Cuban economic crisis of the early 1990s, when the gross domestic product declined by over a third, the Catholic Church became even more assertive in its statements and more active in occupying political and social space as the state receded.

A Call for Reconciliation

In 1993, in the depths of the economic crisis, the Catholic episcopacy issued a pastoral letter, "Love Hopes All

CNS PHOTO/ENRIQUE DE LA OSA, REUTERS

Things," which was an urgent call for dialogue, reconciliation and moral reform. It argued that the time had come for a review of government economic programs, which had been undercut by excessive centralization and ideology. This theme has been repeated in subsequent statements and has found increasing receptivity under Raúl Castro, who assumed power in July 2006 and became head of state in 2008.

The church's call for dialogue and reform has been facilitated by the expansion of church publications like Palabra Nueva and Espacio Laical and the establishment in 2011 of the Félix Varela Center in a former Catholic seminary. The latter has become a center for discussion of current societal problems and raised the visibility of the Catholic Church. It has sponsored seminars and lectures incorporating Cuban American scholars and entrepreneurs. The Archdiocese of Havana has also established a graduate program in business together with the University of Murcia in Spain. The program attempts to meet the needs of people involved in the process of implementing the economic changes proposed at the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party in 2011, particularly the expansion of the nonstate sector. Demand for the course of studies, which began in September 2011 with slightly over 30 students, was high. And many families, Catholic and non-Catholic, have requested after-school programs at local parishes for primary and secondary students. This reflects the degree to which parents are increasingly seeking technical and supplementary courses for their children outside the state school system.

The Catholic Church has also increased its welfare activities, particularly in the areas of health and elder care. Caritas-Cuba is a major provider of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment in cooperation with the Cuban government. Religious sisters from both Cuba and abroad are heavily involved in staffing facilities for the elderly. Throughout Cuba there has been a proliferation of church-supported programs and publications. The diocese of Pinar del Rio had at one time the most controversial religious publication in Cuba, Vitral. Founded in 1994, it aimed to create links within civil society that would encourage greater participation in solving societal problems. It encountered increasing difficulties not only with government officials but also with some in the church for its criticisms of the state. By 1997 some of the editorial staff had left to establish an independent journal. Other church publications, like Imago, have emphasized evangelization, while Vida Joven promotes engagement within Cuban society through the arts. In addition, the church is emphasizing the formation of young people and professionals who may someday assume leadership roles in Cuban society.

ON THE WEB
Margaret E. Crahan reports on her visits to Cuba.
americamagazine.org/podcast

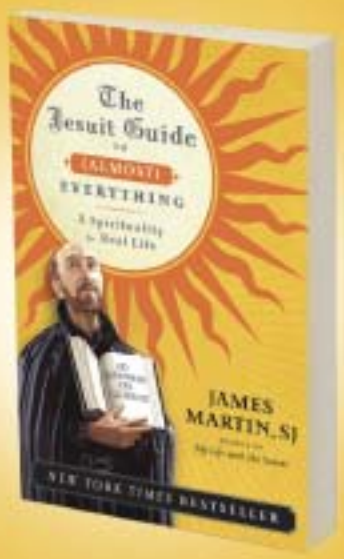
Two Papal Visits

The papal visit in 1998 brought together two of the world's most charismatic figures—Pope John Paul II and Fidel Castro. It came at a time when the Catholic Church had not yet assumed a substantial role in Cuba's domestic affairs. After the visit, some church leaders expressed disappointment that an expanded role had not been achieved. Few in the late 1990s apparently imagined that the Catholic Church would become as much of a political and social actor as it is today. The involvement of the Cuban episcopacy during 2010-11 in the release of political prisoners and the ongoing dialogue between the Cardinal of Havana and Raúl Castro reflect the increasing space that the Catholic Church in Cuba is occupying.

Such developments have not been without controversy both in Cuba and abroad. Some opponents of the Castro government have sharply criticized the increasing contacts between church and state, especially the role of Cardinal Ortega as an interlocutor. Indeed, some 300 Cuban Catholics wrote the Vatican prior to Pope Benedict's visit alleging that Ortega was letting himself be used by the government. In June 2012 the U.S.-funded Radio/TV Martí published an editorial that called Cardinal Ortega a lackey of the Castro government. These and other attacks have caused several Cuban bishops and leading laypeople to come to Ortega's defense. They point to the progress that has been made in church-state relations, as well as to the commitment of the Catholic Church to work for the common good in Cuba and reconciliation between Cubans on the island and those abroad.

The church in Cuba still faces significant challenges, notably the weakness of Cuban civil society, which is relatively unorganized and fragmented. There is a diffuse desire within Cuba and the church for better socioeconomic conditions and more effective political participation, but this desire has not been shaped into a broadly supported societal agenda. The Cuban hierarchy does not appear to favor regime change, which is supported by the U.S. government and some Cuban Americans. Instead, it supports gradual, evolutionary change.

In the absence of an organized and proactive civil society with recognized national leadership, the church has assumed a critical role as an intermediary between the state and society. While the Catholic Church in Cuba may be somewhat weak institutionally, it has become a leading protagonist in the country's affairs. What will happen once civil society strengthens and secular options increase? That is unclear. What is apparent is that the Catholic Church is no longer on the margins. It has become a key player in Cuba's evolution. A



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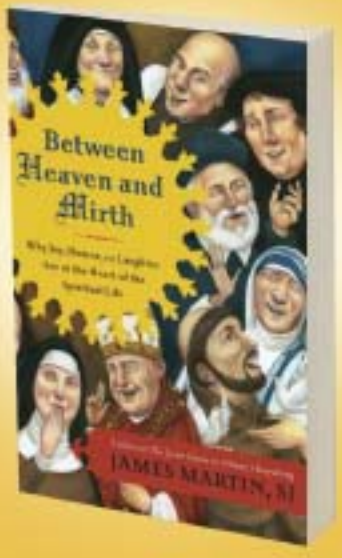

Facebook Apologetics

Philosophical thinking for the new evangelization

BY BRAD ROTHROCK

Because of the recent synod on the new evangelization, and because I study Catholic religious education, the question of how best to converse with the wider world about faith is often on my mind. This is especially true when I am on Facebook. I have a variety of friends: some believers, some unbelievers, some agnostic, some well versed theologically, some not so well versed and some downright hostile to anything religious. So when I post anything that is overtly religious, I am always mindful of how such a post will be received. Recently, I wrote the following on my Facebook wall:

> Reminded that absolutely nothing is mine, not even my very being. It is all gift that is given and sustained by God. In truth I possess nothing, but am graciously allowed to participate in all. I need to remember to never take this for granted or to be resentful that things don't always go the way I want them.

After a few positive comments and some "likes," an old friend of mine, with whom I attended Catholic elementary school and a Catholic youth group up until college, wrote, "Can my being still be mine? Please?" I sympathize with the sentiment. I had to be "reminded" that I am utterly dependent on God because I often forget that is the case. I forget because, like all human beings, I have a tendency to equate my existence with something I own, with something that is mine and to which I have a right. It is thoroughly disconcerting to be told that, actually, you do not own your existence, that, in fact, it is a gift that you have been given to hold, a graciously conferred participation in the infinite source and sustainer of existence that we refer to as God. Indeed, from a certain kind of extreme anthropocentrism, the idea that your very being is bestowed upon you and is not simply your private property can sound somehow degrading, as if you are stripping all agency and dignity from the human person by locating their source in God.

This, in fact, was how my original post came across to my friend. Located within the unbelieving-and-downright-hos-

COMPOSITE ART: AMERICA/SHUTTERSTOCK/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/ FACEBOOK.COM

BRAD ROTHROCK *is a doctoral candidate in theology and education at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.*

tile-to-religion segment of my Facebook friends, she responded that she is already told by our sexist and capitalist society that her body is not hers and that her time and her thoughts are not hers; she certainly does not need religion telling her that her being is not hers. At this point I decided to try the philosophical route. Drawing from the Catholic tradition's insistence that there is a natural knowledge of God that can in principle be agreed upon by all reasonable people of good will, I turned the conversation to the philosophy of being, that is, to metaphysics.

Origins of Existence

Through a series of questions about where her existence came from and how it is that she remains existentially present instead of dropping away into nothingness, I had hoped that we could at the least agree that neither of us originated or sustains our own existence. In other words, I had hoped we could at least agree that our existence is dependent on something outside of ourselves. Keeping in mind that this friend was not only raised Catholic and received Catholic schooling at both the elementary and high-school levels, and that she possesses a master's degree and an upper-level position in a publishing company, I was a little surprised that her first answer to the question of where her existence came from was, "my mother."

I pointed out that she did not get her existence from her mother, but rather that through her mother she was included in a chain of existence that did not originate from any one of those on the chain before her but from an original act of creation. I was even more surprised when she then accused me of being a creationist, a term more aptly applied to those who hold the creation stories in Genesis to be equivalent to a scientific account. The exchange ended several posts later with her declaration that being dependent on a "man-god-idea" was out of the question, while being dependent on a community or "things" was fine.

Now, none of this is meant to cast aspersions on my friend. In fact, I take this whole incident as symptomatic of the need for something that receives little if any attention in talk about the new evangelization—that is, the role of what I have heard the theologian Thomas Groome refer to as a new apologetics, and the importance of philosophical theology as a part of that. Not to be confused with an older neoscholastic apologetics, which was rife with a rationalism that eschews mystery and incomprehensibility, a new apologetics is necessary in order to address the very real intellectual stumbling blocks to faith that are encountered in our contemporary world. Without the hubris of thinking that someone can be argued into faith, or that logic alone will lead someone to a consciously realized and loving relationship with God, it is nevertheless true that faulty conceptions, illogical twists and turns and downright misunderstandings not only of what we mean when we utter the word *God*, but even of such generally agreed upon terms as creationism, undoubtedly hinder any openness to the possibility that Christian belief in the divine is not entirely unreasonable.

Understanding New Realities

While philosophical theology is open to a broad range of approaches, it has become increasingly clear to me in my encounters with students, friends and fellow believers that a lack of familiarity or facility with metaphysical thinking leaves one at a grave disadvantage when it comes to explaining or really understanding references to those realities that are not physical (even as they may be mediated in and through the physical—an idea that itself requires some understanding of the difference between the two). I am not arguing for a wholesale return to the metaphysical thought of Thomas Aquinas exactly as he articulated it in the 13th century—an impossibility, given the advances in our understanding of nature, psychology, physics, evolution and so on. Rather, I am arguing for what the late metaphysician W. Norris Clarke, S.J., called "a creative retrieval" of Aquinas's thought.

Not to be confused with discussion of static essences and a stoically distant and uninspiring "god of the philosophers," or with the claim to a completely comprehensive and universal knowledge, a contemporary Thomistic meta-

physics recognizes the dynamism and uniqueness of all being, the passionate action at the heart of existence and the wonder at our differently shared participation in the very life of the infinite source of all that is. Pierre-Marie Emonet, O.P., another contemporary metaphysician and a student of the late Jacques Maritain, wrote, "The metaphysician and the poet are siblings in the intuitions that open up to the mind and spirit the domain of an erstwhile primordial darkness!" Far from its associations with a stodgy and conservative worldview, a neo-Thomistic metaphysics can release and give creative, poetic and artistic voice to the experience of awe at the very fact of existence. It can provide resources for an environmentally aware theology of creation. It can give a reasonable defense of social justice based on the truth that we are a community of existents, that, as Father Clarke once put it, "to be is to be together, actively present to each other."

Perhaps most important from the vantage point of the new evangelization, metaphysics equips one to think through the intellectual challenges to belief—that is, to speak of God in ways that are not unreasonable even while humbly acknowledging God's ultimate mystery and ineffability. Not an end in itself when used for the purposes of evangelizing, metaphysics enters instead at the phase of what we call pre-evangelization—that is, the preparation that opens and disposes one to hear the word of revelation. It is, in this sense, a form of apologetics. Addressed to the intellectual aspect of the human person, it forms one part of that new evangelization that must ultimately reach not just the head, but the affective, the practical and the spiritual as well.

In the end, and a little too late, my Facebook friend confessed that she really did not want to get into a philosophical discussion. But had she been metaphysically (and holistically) pre-evangelized, she would not have immediately associated the source of her existence with her mother, or creationism with the very different supposition that the world is the result of God's creative activity. Likewise, her term "man-god-idea" would have been pulled apart to reveal how little relationship it bears to the creative mystery we name God. And perhaps her natural quest for knowledge, love, goodness, truth, beauty, justice and so on would have been given free reign, so that such a discussion would not seem burdensome or meaningless.

In an age of seekers after meaning, I can think of no better approach to evangelization than to begin with those ultimate questions addressed by metaphysics in particular and philosophical theology in general: Why is there something rather than nothing? What is the purpose of my existence? If we can get somewhere by reasonable answers to these questions, we will have gone a long way toward clearing the brambles that often choke the potential for belief and, by extension, the reception of the gift of faith in freedom. A

After Ideology

What Catholics can contribute to the political debate

BY IVAN J. KAUFFMAN

Growing up Protestant and Republican in Kansas, I began life as a political conservative. But when I was in college, John F. Kennedy changed that. He and Pope John XXIII opened the door to the Catholic Church for me, and for most of my adult life I considered myself a Catholic political liberal. I am still very much a Catholic, but my political leanings have changed again. I no longer consider myself a liberal—or a conservative.

When the U.S. bishops issued their peace pastoral, "The Challenge of Peace," in 1983, I found great comfort in it. Having been born into an old Mennonite family, I no longer felt I was a traitor to our centuries-long tradition of absolute nonviolence. I began writing about the pastoral for the archdiocesan newspaper in Washington, D.C., and that eventually grew into a syndicated series of weekly columns entitled "Making Peace," published nationally over the next eight years.

The columns were an experiment, and an honest one, since I had no idea how the process would turn out. My mentor and colleague John Howard Yoder looked over my shoulder from the University of Notre Dame theology department, commenting frequently, asking whether the absolute nonviolence we had both inherited from our Amish and Mennonite ancestors could be reconciled with the newly articulated Catholic position. Also judging the columns each week were dozens of diocesan editors who would decide whether to run them. And looking over their shoulders were millions of Catholics who had served in the military and whose family members had also served.

Somehow, that seemingly impossible set of challenges was met for several years. And it might have gone on indefinitely had it not been for a trip to the Soviet Union. A large delegation organized by the National Council of Churches visited churches in the Soviet Union in 1985, and I joined the group as a journalist. At the time nearly everyone, liberal and conservative alike, believed the churches in nations under Communist control had all been closed. But it soon became obvious that the churches in Russia had emerged from persecution damaged but not destroyed. I reported only a small portion of what we saw, but even that was disturbing to many readers. A former C.I.A. officer who read one of the columns sent a letter to The Washington Times warning its readers that I was "a paid disinformation agent of the K.G.B."

Three years later I helped organize a group of U.S. Catholics for a visit to Catholic churches in the Soviet Union. That trip ended in Poland, where one Saturday afternoon we visited the church in Nowa Huta near Kraków, constructed when Cardinal Wojtyla, later Pope John Paul II, was its bishop. It is a stunning theological statement in concrete. We asked a parishioner preparing his great church for Mass how it could have been built in a new city planned by Communists, and he looked at me with astonishment. To him the answer was obvious. "We told them we wouldn't work if they didn't build us a church," he said.

Ideological Blinders

The next year the Berlin Wall came down, and Poland became free. When that happened it became clear that many of the things we had taken for granted during the cold war had been based on myth, not reality. The consensus position in the liberal community had been that the Soviet Empire was here to stay, and the most we could hope for was to get along with it. We regarded the conservative position—that Communism was a great evil that had to be defeated—as blindly militaristic and almost certain to produce a nuclear holocaust. But neither did the evidence support those who believed the Reagan military buildup had caused the empire's collapse. Their critique of the liberal position—that we had been prepared to let Eastern Europe endure an endless unjust occupation so the West could enjoy a false peace—did, however, gain new credibility.

The evidence since 1989 indicates it was Solidarity that brought down the Soviet empire, and that it did so with very little support from the West—left or right.

What was it that had so completely blinded us to what was actually happening in the Soviet Union? Why hadn't we supported Solidarity and similar movements throughout the Soviet Empire when we had the chance? What were we thinking? It has become increasingly clear to me that what got in our way was a commitment to ideology, shared with equal fervor across the political spectrum. The left and the right obviously had different ideologies, but we all believed that some single idea would produce solutions to these problems, even before we knew precisely what the problems were.

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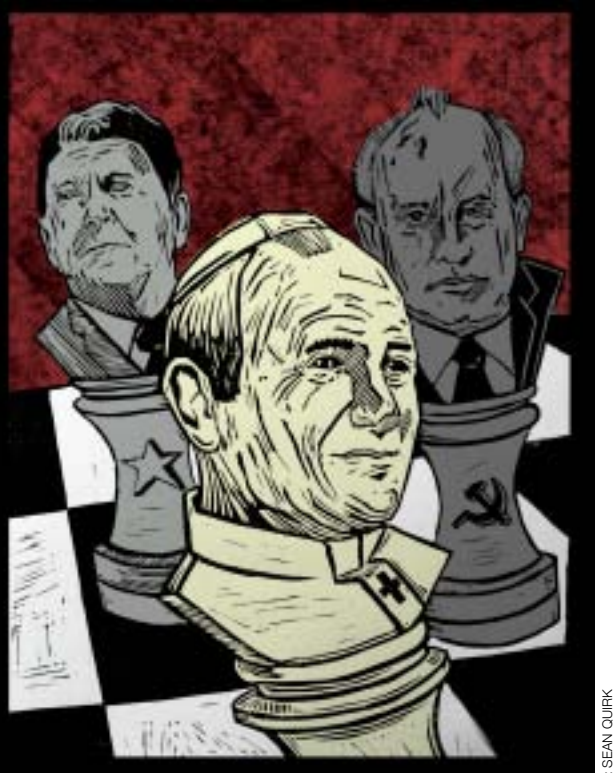
The U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on peace also had a major political impact, almost certainly helping to end the cold war. It was a significant use of hierarchical power, possible because both Cardinal John Krol and Cardinal Joseph Bernardin—one widely regarded as a conservative and the other as a liberal—joined in supporting the effort. The U.S. Catholic bishops no longer have the political influence they had in 1983. And they will not regain it until they are able to advocate positions that Catholics on both the left and the right can support. U.S. Catholics themselves are currently in danger of becoming as politically divided as the nation. Both liberals and conservatives were wrong about the cold war, and those of us who aligned ourselves with either side are now embarrassed. What reason do we have to believe the positions now being taken by either the secular right or the secular left will embarrass us less 20 or 30 years in the future?

We have allowed the secular political establishment to set the agenda for political debate within the church.



ART: SEAN QUIRK

A Faith-Based Option?

There are three options open to us, not just two—left, right and Catholic. The options offered by both the left and the right are based on ideology. The Catholic option is based on realism—the careful and patient discovery of facts and the search for policies based on both facts and on the Catholic imperative to preserve and enhance the common good. Catholic and centrist are not the same; we do not achieve the common good by splitting the difference between competing ideologies. We achieve the common good by finding and advocating solutions to the real problems of real people living in the real world.

Despite a widely expressed desire to end the partisan gridlock that now paralyzes American politics, it stubbornly continues and grows. And despite the U.S. Catholic bishops' regular pleas for a new politics based on human rights and the common good, Catholics have been unable to offer a national alternative to the political warfare now taking place. Instead, we have contributed to it. Both those bishops who have openly identified with the political right and those who disagree but have remained silent have equally contributed to a widely held public perception that the Catholic hierarchy has joined the right-versus-left battle on the conservative side.

Rather than becoming a moderating force in the civil war of ideas now taking place, we have allowed the secular political establishment to set the agenda for political debate within the Catholic Church itself. One does not have to be a theologian to see the defects in that development, nor a political expert to see where it will lead. What is the alternative? What are politically active Catholics to do when our real choice is between reality and ideology, not between conservative and liberal?

After a lifetime of struggling with these issues, I am convinced the greatest contribution U.S. Catholics can make is to organize coalitions of citizens—both Catholic and non-Catholic, conservative and liberal—to develop nonideological solutions to our major political problems and then to advocate them effectively. Elected officials have attempted to do this in recent years but have routinely failed because they are completely dependent on the system they seek to reform. Sick people are seldom able to heal themselves; the same is true for sick political systems.

We have two major political successes to guide us—the civil rights movement of the 1960s and Poland's Solidarity movement of the 1980s. In both cases great armies of citizens banded together to produce seemingly impossible changes.

Both formed around a nucleus of deep Christian faith, in one case Protestant and in the other Catholic. They were two of the most successful and defining political events of the 20th century, but they represent an unfinished revolution.

A few hours before Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, he told a younger colleague, "In our next campaign we have to institutionalize nonviolence and take it international." After Solidarity's victory in Poland, Pope John Paul II began urging the international Catholic community to create a new "civilization of love."

Neither of these great dreams will become a reality unless we form new political institutions able to provide alternatives to the current right-versus-left ideological conflict. What form these new institutions will take is unknowable at this point, but it is almost certain they will emerge. American democracy will not survive unless we find new post-ideological ways to conduct our political affairs.

Regardless of how we Catholic voters choose to exert our political power in the future, it seems clear we must do something more than choose between the unsatisfactory options offered us by the existing political parties. It is hardly consistent with the Catholic tradition to let those who do not share our values set our political agenda. It is even less Catholic to stand on the sidelines criticizing what others do, especially when we offer no alternatives. Democracy thrives on new ideas. Let us offer some. A

IDEAS | TERRANCE W. KLEIN

UNBREAKABLE BOND

Fifty years of 007

School children are touring the throne room of Buckingham Palace when a taxi enters its enclosure. The youngsters watch as a tuxedoed James Bond (Daniel Craig) steps from the cab. He confidently passes through palace corridors until an attendant, in medals and tails, ushers him into the queen's chambers. Her Majesty continues to work for a moment.

"Good evening, Mr. Bond."

"Good evening, Ma'am."

Moments later, the Queen and Mr. Bond board a sleek helicopter, much more worthy of 007 than a London taxi, and after flying through—not above—Tower Bridge, the aircraft hovers over Olympic Stadium. As the familiar guitar chords of the Bond theme ring out, James and his royal companion (or, at the very least, their stunt doubles) parachute into the crowd, and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland takes her place in the long, long line of Bond girls.

This scene is not one from an official Bond film, but from the opening ceremony of this year's Olympic Games in London. Danny Boyle, the film director who masterminded the opening ceremony, wanted to celebrate all that the world considers quintessentially British. Like Bond aiming his Beretta from some incredibly difficult posture or position, Boyle couldn't have been more on target.

This year marks 60 "happy and glorious" years upon the throne for the queen and 50 years of service by Bond

PHOTO: REUTERS/SUZANNE PLUNKETT

A BMW Z8 from the exhibition "Bond in Motion: 50 Vehicles, 50 Years" at the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu, England.

"for queen and country." And while it is impossible to imagine anyone else playing the queen's role, five actors have preceded Craig in the role of Bond: Sean Connery, George Lazenby, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton and Pierce Brosnan.

Preceding all of them, of course, was Ian Fleming, creator of the world's greatest spy, and, like his creation, a most established Brit. Fleming's father was a member of Parliament and a close associate of Winston Churchill. Fleming attended Eton, where he excelled athletically. Next came Sandhurst, Britain's Royal Military Academy. During the Second World War, Lt. Cmdr. Fleming served as personal assistant to the director of Naval Intelligence, Admiral John Godfrey. He accompanied commandoes who pricked Hitler's Fortress Europa, raiding the port of Dieppe. As a novelist, Fleming hosted the likes of Noël Coward and Prime Minister Anthony Eden at his Jamaican winter home, Golden Eye. And it was he who invented the now classic Bond martini—shaken, not stirred.

Unfortunately, Bond has also inherited his creator's misogyny. In a conversation with a friend, Fleming once compared women to pets or dogs, and Bond does not hold back either. In *Casino Royale*, the first of the Fleming novels, when Bond is told that he will be assisted by a woman, he sighs and thinks to himself, "Women are for recreation. On a job, they get in the way and fog things up with sex and hurt feelings and all the emotional baggage they carry around. One has to look out for them and take care of them."

Fortunately, the distance between the 1953 novel and its 2006 movie adaptation left room for women to progress in Bond's world. In the movie, Judi Dench plays the head spy-master, M. In both the novel and the movie, Bond falls hard for Vesper Lynd, his female partner. In both she is still attached to a previous lover and her involvement with nefarious powers leads to her death. In the film world, James is still mourning Lynd when "Quantum of Solace," the sequel to "Casino Royale," opens. But in the novel her death elicits from Bond only the chilling line, "The bitch is dead now."

Although the movies of the Bond franchise improve on Fleming's view of women, they never fully expunge the misogyny. In "Dr. No," a waitress is caught eavesdropping, and a goon asks James, "Shall I break her arm?" Sean Connery's Bond laconically responds, "Maybe later." The violence toward women in the Bond storylines perhaps reflects Fleming's own interest in sadism. It is difficult to find a Bond film in which a woman is not physically assaulted. In "From Russia With Love" (1963), Bond slaps his lover on the hand and asks if she finds his technique too violent. The movie includes two wrestling gypsy girls, intent on fighting to the death over a man.

ON THE WEB
Julie Rattey reviews the play "Marie Antoinette."
americamagazine.org/culture

Fleming once summed up his Bond novels as "straight pillow fantasies of the bang-bang, kiss-kiss variety"— male adolescent fiction. Neither the end of the cold war nor the rapid pace of globalization has frayed demand for such fare. Cars and high speed chases still stand in for male potency, and British scientists continue to equip Bond with exotic gadgets, though, in a few of the most recent movies, James seems to rely on nothing so much as a cell phone with extraordinarily fine apps.

Bond is presented as the epitome of masculinity, an aspiration apparent in the opening sequence of the first movie, "Dr. No." A camera lens focuses upon a man, strolling in a fedora. The figure suddenly pivots to fire a pistol. The message, still repeated in the newest iterations, is clear: this seeming everyman—suave and debonair, intensely athletic, irresistible to women and morally muted—could be you.

Born in and of the cold war, the Bond character continues to protect the world from those who have no moral scruples, even as he himself is never weighed down by them. What Bond admires about the Russians is

(Continued on pg. 30)

FILM | JIM McDERMOTT

SHAKY, NOT STIRRING

Daniel Craig explores Bond's damaged soul in 'Skyfall'

Skyfall, the 23rd James Bond film and the third starring Daniel Craig, opened in the United States on Nov. 8 after already storming the box office worldwide. It earned $156 million in its first three days alone.

The premise of the film, directed by Sam Mendes and written by John Logan, Robert Wade and Neal Purvis, is familiar: A list of British secret agents is stolen, and the thief, a former company man himself, attempts to use the information to wreak revenge on his former unit for its wrongs.

Though Craig's first Bond film, "Casino Royale" (2006), was set in the early days of the character's history, in a strange way "Skyfall" is another Bond origin story. Fans have long complained that the Craig films have lacked many of the unique charms—the gadgets, the quips, the cast of characters—that we expect in a Bond film.

These fans will gripe no more. By the time "Skyfall" ends, almost every element they've missed has been re-established, some hidden in plain sight until the very end.

The problem is, many of these elements simply do not fit Daniel Craig's Bond. His is not a Bond who quips easily, or at all; he is a damaged soul filled with silent fury. Craig mouths the zingers sprinkled left and right throughout the "Skyfall" script, but for the most part they land as colorless as cellophane.

Judi Dench has done so much with so little in her prior ventures in the role of M, director of MI6 and Bond's handler. Here her character is given a much meatier role, and she delivers a strong, multifaceted performance that expands M's relationship with Bond both believably and unexpectedly.

Daniel Craig in "Skyfall"

The title sequence, sung by the British soulstress Adele, is as wild and lush as any Bond film has produced. The film also features some extraordinary action sequences. The opening chase through a Turkish city would be the big finish for most action films. Another early sequence, on an abandoned upper floor of a building in Shanghai, neon filaments floating beyond the glass, is as stunning visually as anything likely to appear in an action film this year.

Having said that, latter sequences have a difficult time living up to the first hour's promise. Javier Bardem, as Raoul Silva, a dark twin of James Bond, carries a great deal of the film with his funny, subversive, psychotic performance. But much of the chaos he creates—a chase through subways, an attack upon an isolated mansion—is nothing new for an action film or even a television series. And the final sequence, which takes us to Bond's childhood home, is more than a little preposterous.

Some (many) will say, of course it's preposterous; it's Bond! But after working so hard in the last two films to build the character up from scratch into a gritty, hard-scrabble realism, to now accept some of the flights of fancy in "Skyfall" is a bit like accepting Elvis as he slides into his first leisure suit. You try to look past it, but you can't help worrying.

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that they "have no stupid prejudices about murder." In his current incarnation, Daniel Craig, who is "licensed to kill," has never been more blue-eyed or cold-blooded. Judi Dench's M truculently tells Bond in "Quantum of Silence," "If you could avoid killing every possible lead, it would be deeply appreciated."

He answers, "I'll do my best."

She retorts, "I've heard that before."

Of course, as champion of the West, Bond kills with reason. He neither enjoys nor deplores the violence. He is a flesh-and-blood version of the drones still flying over Pakistan, an impassive predator, appointed to do what we would rather not admit is done in our name.

Over the past 50 years, Bond's struggles and enemies have echoed the concerns of the times. In 1962 the eponymous Dr. No tried to divert American satellites launched from Cape Canaveral. In 1979 Hugo Drax stole the American space shuttle, "Moonraker." In 2002 the villain of "Die Another Day" was a North Korean terrorist. Behind the evil masterminds are secretive cabals, armed with seemingly endless resources—a model of attack all too real to us today. In "Skyfall," the most recent film (see pg. 29), Bond's opponent takes technology to another level, employing a cyber attack on an unsuspecting MI6.

At his core, Bond is—must be—British. Fleming's *Casino Royale* was first filmed as an American-made TV special in the 1950s. In it, Bond was an American spy. It didn't take. American action heroes are not known for being suave and sophisticated. Our on-screen espionage is either handled by gamins like Tom Cruise and Matt Damon, or we turn to the testosterone-pumped: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis or Chuck Norris. None of them know their way around martinis or mating. But somehow, as a Brit, Bond convinces us of his cool. As long as the world is a dangerous place, he can be counted on to remain in service. And with any luck, given the caliber of the women with whom he now consorts—Her Majesty the Queen and Dame Judi Dench among them—unlike Peter Pan, that other British export, he may yet grow up.

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BOOKS | HERMAN R. EBERHARDT

SEEDS OF VICTORY

DECEMBER 1941
Twelve Days That Began a World War

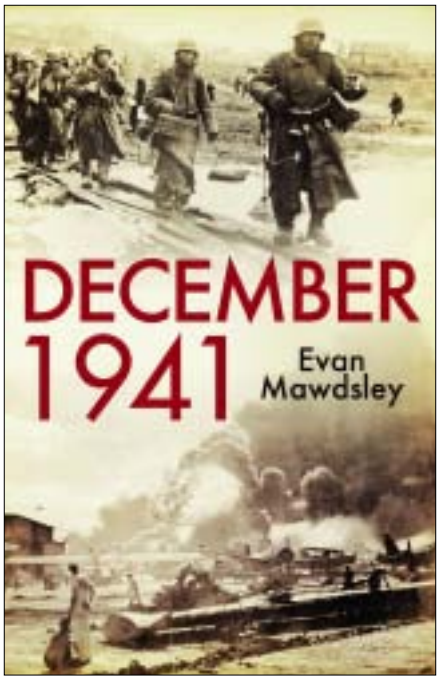
Evan Mawdsley
Yale University Press. 360p $18

Certain dates in history have a powerful hold on the American imagination. When we think about World War II, we remember Dec. 7, 1941—a date President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed would forever live "in infamy." Our minds also turn to D-Day, June 6, 1944, when Allied forces led by General Dwight D. Eisenhower landed in northern Europe and helped seal the doom of the Axis powers. We may also recall Aug. 6 and 9, 1945, when atomic bombs dropped from U.S. airplanes exploded in the skies over two Japanese cities.

These dates frame a distinctly American view of the war, one that obscures as much as it enlightens. For World War II was truly a global contest, sprawling over five continents and involving dozens of nations. Underway for years before the United States entered the fight, this titanic conflict was shaped by a variety of international forces and events interconnected in complex ways.

One of the many achievements of Evan Mawdsley's ambitious and deeply researched new book is to place the American narrative of World War II into a larger global context. In *December 1941: Twelve Days That Began A World War*, he weaves the familiar story of Japan's attack on Dec. 7 against U.S. targets in the Pacific into a broader history of the pivotal early weeks of December 1941. He argues forcefully that a series of events around the globe between Dec. 1 and Dec. 12, 1941, both merged and decisively changed the course of what had been two distinct wars. The first had been raging in Europe since September 1939. The second had cast a shadow over Asia since at least July 1937. Mawdsley shows how the events of December 1941 melded these two conflicts into one, creating what Winston Churchill called a "new war"—one that the Axis powers were doomed to lose.

The months before December 1941 were desperate ones for the Allied coalition battling Hitler and Mussolini— which by this point in the war amounted to the British Empire and the Soviet Union. Germany and Italy controlled most of Europe. In the east, the German Wehrmacht was pressing at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad. In North Africa, Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps threatened to drive British forces out of Egypt. In the North Atlantic, German submarines were sinking a staggering number of supply ships bound for Great Britain and the Soviet Union. These ships carried vitally needed armaments from the United States provided through President



Roosevelt's innovative Lend Lease program. Lend Lease made it possible for the United States to combat Axis aggression without entering the war. Powerful American isolationist sentiment kept the president from venturing much farther.

The considerable perils faced by the Allies were heightened by growing threats in Asia, where Japan seemed poised to expand its war of empire into Southeast Asia by seizing British and Dutch colonies. Japan was allied with Germany and Italy in the June 1940 Tripartite Pact, which mandated that each would come to the other's defense if "attacked by a Power at present not involved in the European War or in the Japanese-Chinese conflict." The pact was clearly aimed at discouraging U.S. intervention.

Mawdsley presents this dismal global picture in detail before revealing how it was upended by the events of Dec. 1-12, 1941, in the Atlantic, North Africa, the Soviet Union and the Far East. His gripping, day-by-day account takes the reader to Washington, Berlin, Moscow, London, Tokyo, Rome and a host of other locations.

Some of this history covers familiar ground. Japan's final decision to strike both British and American targets in Asia and the Pacific was made on Dec. 1. The subsequent attacks immediately drew the United States into the war. Isolationist sentiment disappeared overnight and the nation's economic and military power became a crucial factor in the global balance of forces.

But Mawdsley explores other events of this crucial 12-day period that also helped decisively change the course of the war. On Dec. 1, while Japan's leaders were deliberating war, British tanks were mobilizing for what would prove to be their first full-scale victory over German Panzers in North Africa. During the next week they defeated Rommel's forces at Tobruk and drove them back from the Egyptian frontier.

On Dec. 6 the war in Eastern Europe was transformed as Soviet troops—previously on the defensive—began mounting sudden and successful counterattacks in front of Moscow. German forces would remain on Soviet soil for nearly three years and Axis and Soviet deaths would mount into the millions. But after Dec. 6 Germany's string of unchecked advances in the east was at an end.

On Dec. 11 Germany declared war on the United States. Hitler's action—which was not required under the terms of the Tripartite Pact—freed President Roosevelt from a dilemma. In the wake of Pearl Harbor, U.S. anger burned against Japan. Yet Roosevelt understood that Germany posed the greater threat to American security. In the event of a two-front war, he planned to pursue a strategy of defeating "Germany first." Hitler's declaration of war made this task much easier.

By the morning of Dec. 12, Churchill's "new war" was at hand. A grand alliance of Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States was about to emerge. We now know that this marked a decisive shift in the global balance of power, though this was not clear to many observers at the

time. In the dark months that followed December 1941, Japan conquered a vast empire in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. In the Soviet Union, German and Soviet forces continued to fight desperate battles with enormous casualties. U-boats continued to sink Allied shipping in the North Atlantic, while German tanks roamed vast stretches of North Africa. And all the while, Germany accelerated its genocidal campaign to exterminate Europe's Jews.

Despite these horrors and setbacks, clear thinkers like Winston Churchill understood that the events of December 1941 had irreversibly altered the war's course. Later he recalled that on the night of December 7, "I went to bed and slept the sleep of the saved and thankful."

Eighteen hours later and 3,600 miles away, Franklin Roosevelt reflected the same confidence when he stood before a joint session of Congress to ask for a declaration of war against Japan. His face was grim, but his voice rang out with determination as he concluded his address: "With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God." In his masterful book, Mawdsley demonstrates how President Roosevelt's conviction rested on a solid foundation. For the tide of battle had already turned.

ON THE WEB
Read America's editorial on the attack on Pearl Harbor.
americamagazine.org/pages

HERMAN R. EBERHARDT *is the supervisory museum curator at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, N.Y. The opinions expressed in this review represent his personal views and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Archives and Records Administration.*

EILEEN MARKEY

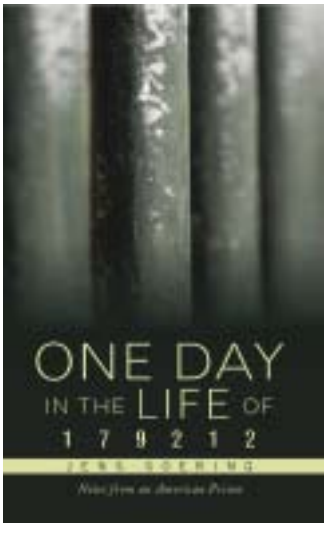
NOT ABOUT REDEMPTION

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF 179212

Notes From an American Prison

Jens Soering
Lantern Books. 176p $18

Taking inspiration from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Jens Soering has written an unblinking and harrowing critique of the American prison system and what he argues is the nation's over-reliance on incarceration. Soering takes readers through a single day at the Brunswick Correctional Center in Virginia, from 4:20 a.m., when he wakes to the sound of a powerful toilet flushing in the 11 foot by 6 foot cell he shares with another man, until 7:45 p.m. when he climbs into his bunk and prays the last verse of Psalm 142: "Lead us out of our prison, that we may give thanks to your name. Then the just will gather around us, because you have been good to us."



Soering is serving two life sentences for a double murder in 1985, which he maintains he did not commit. He has exhausted his legal options of appeal, and an effort to have him remanded to his native Germany, where his case is closely followed, was unsuccessful. But *One Day in the Life* is not about Soering's case, or wrongful imprisonment or DNA exonerations. Instead it is a clear-eyed and methodical brief against America's use of mass incarceration and against the very notion of imprisonment as an effective method for rehabilitating people who break the law.

The United States locks up 751 of every 100,000 of its people. Germany locks up 96 for every 100,000. A similarly striking gap appears in the rest of western Europe. Like Michelle Alexander in *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Soering argues that the United States has been on a prison binge since the 1970s. According to the Pew Center on the States, the U.S. prison population grew by 700 percent between 1970 and 2005, compared to a 44 percent growth in the nation's population as a whole. We had 1.5 million people in prison in 2009 and 7.2 million involved in the criminal justice system, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. In 1980 those numbers were 300,000 and 1.8 million respectively.

In literate, at times wry prose, Soering argues that this policy is not working. He constructs a searing brief against a system he says is corrosively corrupting to prisoners and corrections personnel alike, is counterproductive to public safety and the health of society and is a tremendous waste of money.

But other books have made those arguments before. What makes *One Day in the Life* a valuable addition to literature on prison is its hybrid of prison memoir, social critique and inside-the-gates reporting. He challenges Christians to rethink our basic commitment to punishment, retribution and penance.

Soering explains prison as relent-

lessly dehumanizing, a steady river of insults and affronts, a caged-in way of being that makes honesty or virtue difficult. Tellingly, guards have less regard for the prisoners who try to follow the rules, who try to better themselves or who complain about infractions. He tells how he stopped listening to music or watching television 12 years ago, because the flickering glimpses of his former life were too painful. "Every aspect of it reminded me in some way of what I'd lost," he writes. He is a man shut down, withdrawn from emotion. And he explains that most other prisoners are as well, anesthetized as they are by music videos, abandoned by family or other visitors as their sentences drag on, exposed to rampant rape and sexual coercion, able to form no true friendships and forever at risk of breaking some capricious regulation. Long-term prisoners are in no shape to rejoin society upon their release. Prostitution is tolerated; solitary confinement in which prisoners quickly lose their sanity is widely used; and graft among correctional staff is common.

All this is in a model prison, one in which prisoners have considerable freedom of movement. Soering sees the whole operation as fundamentally corrupt and corrupting, from the chronically under-available addiction and counseling services to the laughably meager offerings of G.E.D. classes or other education for a population with huge numbers of illiterate people.

Soering's eye is keen. He documents in detail the shrinking size of prisoner meals in the facilities in which he has been incarcerated—the Virginia Department of Corrections spends just 61 cents on each meal—and the attendant hunger prisoners carry throughout the day. Most use the pennies they earn in jobs in the laundry or workshop to supplement their diet at the overpriced and privately-run for-profit commissary. "With every meal on every tray, society reminds us of how much it despises us," he writes.

Soering, a man with a keen mind and no one to talk to, has had a lot of time to think. His analyses of the debasement of incarceration and the cynicism of unfunded, tiny but widely heralded prison reforms are difficult to read. While Soering has kept himself alive and has clung to his humanity through a disciplined practice of centering prayer, this is not a story of a soul released. This is not a prison memoir about redemption or about finding joy in an unlikely place or the ennobling nature of suffering. It is a shout from the depths—one worth reading.

Soering is the author of four other books, including *The Way of the Prisoner*, *The Church of the Second Chance*, *An Expensive Way to Make Bad People Worse* and *The Convict Christ*. His articles have appeared in **America**.

EILEEN MARKEY *is a journalist based in the Bronx, N.Y. She is writing a biography of the martyred Maryknoll sister Maura Clarke.*

RITA FERRONE

LAST THINGS FIRST

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

The Paschal Mystery in People, Word, and Sacrament

Bruce T. Morrill, S.J.
Paulist Press. 144p $16.95

ESCHATOLOGY, LITURGY, AND CHRISTOLOGY

Toward Recovering an Eschatological Imagination

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J.
Liturgical Press. 184p $19.95

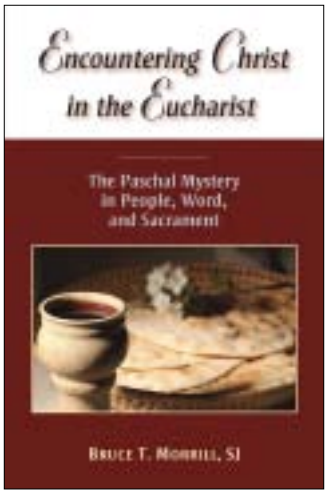
For the Jewish people, Peter Fink, S.J., once wrote, God is the one who "comes," who "leads," who "abides" and who "hides." The early Christian community appealed to the same four dynamics in speaking of Christ: "the Christ who *comes* ('maranatha'), the Christ who *leads* ('I go before you'), the Christ who *abides* ('I am with you all days') and the Christ who *hides* ('You are the body of Christ')." (*Worship: Praying the Sacraments*, Pastoral Press, 1991). This evocative typology serves as the springboard for Bruce Morrill's new book, *Encountering Christ in the Eucharist*.

After an introduction focusing on sacramental presence, Morrill organizes his reflections on the Eucharist in four sections: "Hidden Presence: The Mystery of the Assembly as the Body of Christ," "Holy Scripture: Revelation of the Mystery in Our Time," "Eucharistic Communion: Christ's Abiding Presence" and "Leadership for Christ's Body: Liturgy and Ministry." Under these four headings, he offers a compendium of theological insights related to assembly, word, Eucharist and ministry.

Some of these insights are very fine. His discussion of sacramental character, for example, ranges from Augustine to Chauvet and, following the thought of Bernard Cooke, culminates in the concept of communal sacramental character. Usually the notion of sacramental character is used to describe the lasting effect upon individuals of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and holy orders. Here, however, Morrill applies it to the Eucharist and not only to individuals but to the community as a whole:

The communal ecclesial priority

of the celebration of the sacraments corrects the negative connotations that an individualistic view of grace entailed… Rather than define the character in relation to the continual possibility of losing the state of grace, a corporate view of sacramental grace perceives the Holy Spirit forming the members of the liturgical assembly in the image and likeness of God, through sharing in the paschal mystery of the Son.



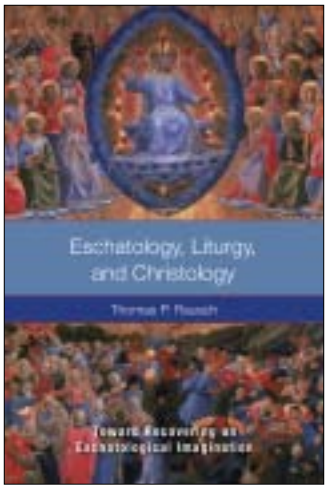
Where the book fails to convince is in Morrill's treatment of the cross. He dismisses atonement theology as a "sadomasochistic drama" and suggests that Christians might be better off without the notion of sacrifice altogether. Having acknowledged, however, that "most contemporary theologians recognize the impossibility of eliminating sacrificial discourse from Christianity" he attempts to redeem sacrifice by recasting it in terms of love.

He speaks of the "costly love of friendship" and observes that "love, even from the side of God, knows a necessary pain in surrender if life-giving union is to be born." The latter is meant to be an allusion to childbirth on the cross—an adventurous mystical reading which, if it is to be useful, requires more careful exposition than it receives here. More important, however, assimilating the cross to natural processes—however painful—seems insufficient to carry the weight of the tradition or even to come to terms with the historical fact of the passion. The "necessary" pain of the cross arises not from the general fact that love hurts, but from the specific fact that those whom God chooses to love are sinners. To reframe sacrifice so that it no longer involves sin is to do more than change the frame; it changes the picture.

The book by Thomas Rausch, S.J., *Eschatology, Liturgy, and Christology*, offers a summary and evaluation of contemporary scholarship on the subject of eschatology. He sets out questions that cannot fail to engage anyone who takes Christian faith seriously:

> What is our hope as Christians? To what do we look forward? Does God forget the countless victims of history? What about our beloved dead? What future does God have in store for us? Will it involve our beautiful earth? To raise these questions is to ask about eschatology....

The goal of the work is to recover a robust emphasis on the biblical concept of the *eschaton*, which in the history of Christian thought came to be eclipsed by the *eschata*, or the last things. This is a tall order, but the author draws on a considerable body of contemporary theological reflection to meet it. The main theologians whose works are discussed are Dermot Lane, Peter Phan, Johann Baptist Metz, Jon Sobrino, Terrence Tilley, Brian Robinette, Terence Nichols, Elizabeth Johnson and Joseph Ratzinger. By the end of the book, he has critically reviewed their thought on various aspects of the subject—from the meaning of resurrection and whether or not the dead are raised at the moment of death; to the fate of the earth and the bearing of scientific discovery on our ideas about the end of the world; to the tension between a kingdom-centered Christian witness and a Christ-centered witness in the field of mission. The clarity and fair-mindedness with which Rausch presents and compares their views is admirable. For anyone who is not already widely read in this subject, his book will be an invaluable introduction and guide.



The chapter on liturgy, however, was a bit disappointing. Rausch focuses on the Eucharist and includes a discussion of liturgical time and memory, a section on liturgy and social justice, and a detailed discussion of the Mass. Astonishingly, however, he never mentions the Agnus Dei or the invitation to Communion, with its allusion to the Supper of the Lamb. Nor does he acknowledge the eschatological motifs of the baptismal liturgy. The latter omission is particularly unfortunate. Any recovery of eschatological imagination among Catholics surely must owe something to the restoration of the Easter Vigil, not to mention the rites of the catechumenate and the explanatory rites after baptism.

This said, both of these books make valuable contributions and will be useful to students of theology and liturgy as well as to general readers. The authors grapple with challenging questions in ways that will make their readers think, and stretch their imaginations.

RITA FERRONE *is the author of several books about liturgy, including* Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium *in the Paulist series "Rediscovering Vatican II."*

LETTERS

The Way of the Kingdom

Re "Defending Hyde," by Richard M. Doerflinger (11/19): It's good to hear people pushing back on the "war on women" rhetoric. It is such an empty, manufactured slogan concocted by political consultants.

There is a serious problem in the pro-choice and pro-life movements. In the movements themselves—not necessarily in all people who hold these positions—there is a complete lack of respect or understanding of the other side's position. This does not happen, of course, by accident; it is a result of our political process. Both movements are organized, and strict loyalty is demanded inside the parties they have claimed as their own. Both parties use the issue essentially to coerce voters into voting for their side. Because the nation is relatively divided on the issue, this equilibrium cannot be broken.

One thing that could turn the tide is for one side to reach out to the other (specifically the pro-life side standing alongside pregnant women in love) as their brothers and sisters, trying to change hearts rather than making it all some political game. This could break the gridlock. But alas, forming a modern political interest group is seductive. It brings power and self-righteousness, and means you never have to get your hands dirty. This is the way of the world, not the way of the kingdom. Christianity is not a set of results; it is a method, a way.

MICHAEL GILLMAN
South Bend, Ind.

Peddling Innocence

I do not feel like a true Christian when reading "Peddling Deception" (Editorial, 11/12). Why disparage somebody, especially under circumstances like Lance Armstrong's? Setting aside the fact that he denies the allegations against him, we generally believe people are innocent until proven guilty. What would Jesus do?

BOB O'CONNELL
Rockford, Ill.

Nothing to Admire

It is most definitely and most appropriate for the "superhero" to be chastised for a fall from virtue. A hero is a person we look up to, emulate and hold up to be admired. There is nothing to emulate or admire about the actions of Lance Armstrong. Heroic virtue is the sign of a hero.

Our obsession with celebrity (and the money that goes with it) needs to be tempered with righteousness and justice. It is entirely appropriate for a Catholic magazine to clarify heroism in our culture of declining values and disregard for truth. Virtue is the only basis for true democracy and true liberality.

TERRY HALLADAY
Lakewood, Colo.

Who Doesn't Count

Re "Las Casas' Discovery," by Robert Ellsberg (11/5): I found the recognition of those who "don't count" to be poignant. This article documented quite well the shameful legacy of Central America regarding "the crucified peoples of history." Our own nation, with its promise of equality, is much to blame—not only for the sufferings of Central America, but the injustices within our borders.

Interestingly, the recent presidential election highlighted this. While the Republican Party gets high marks for its emphasis on traditional values, especially the right to life and personal responsibility, it appears to have turned deaf ears to the plight of the poor and voiceless. The Democrats capitalized

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on this by reaching out to the young and uninitiated, minorities and women. Whether these appeals were cynical or misguided remains to be seen.

Sadly, America is split between these two polarized and flawed cultures. Politicians capitalize upon this divide, using it for personal advantage. Meanwhile compromise—in its most negative sense—seems to be at the expense of the weakest citizens, whose appearance, ethnicity or social standing consigns them to the masses that "don't count." One wishes that, regardless of consequences, courageous persons with the integrity of a Bartolomé de las Casas could speak truth to power. But would they too meet the same indifference?

CHARLES BUTERA
East Northport, N.Y.

Please Explain

Denis Jain ("Sex, Art and Altarpieces," 10/29) rightly praises Steven Ozment's *The Serpent and the Lamb,* the story of the collaboration of Martin Luther and Lucas Cranach in promoting the Reformation and wiping away Renaissance attitudes towards sex. It is a fascinating, very well-written book, even for someone like me who is not an expert in art or Reformation history.

But I found it odd that Ozment spends a great deal of time describing Cranach's entrepreneurial skills and his success as a politician, but devotes less than one paragraph (p. 103) to Cranach's execution of three women and others on charges of witchcraft, having sex with the devil, poisoning fertile fields and causing violent storms.

They were different times and different standards apply, but if Ozment wants to praise Cranach's intellectual and moral capabilities, he should have made some attempt to explain these brutal decisions, and how a man dedicated to art and improving society could make them.

JOHN MULQUEEN
New Rochelle, N.Y.

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on **America**'s Web site, www.americamagazine.org. This allows us to consider your letter for publication in both print and online versions of the magazine. Letters may also be sent to **America**'s editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org. They should be brief and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

In Memoriam

Re the passing of John Kavanaugh, S.J., the longtime columnist for **America** (Of Many Things, Matt Malone, S.J., 11/26): He was truly a great man and great Jesuit. It was Father Kavanaugh's bioethics class at Saint Louis University that first opened my mind to the huge and intersecting questions of law, ethics and morality, and he later became a wise and generous guide to some of the thornier questions in Catholic theology. As brilliant as he was, he was never too abstract to ignore the real human lives that all our religious theorizing must serve. It was an honor to know him, to study under him and to learn from his deep and humble faith. I am one of many SLU alumni who will mourn his passing and celebrate his life.

MATT EMERSON
Palm Desert, Calif.

The writer is the author of "Help Their Unbelief" (9/10).

Define Service

The May 14 issue of **America** featured not one but two advertisements for chaplains to serve the U.S. war machine. The Air Force ad asks, "Are you called to serve those serving?" Serving whom? Those who handle the nuclear arsenal and operate the drones?

The Navy ad [which also appears on the back cover of this issue] asks for a priest to serve a "small town," a town that purportedly nurtures life. However, the billion-dollar warship, with what look like A-10 warthogs equipped with hellfire missiles, exists for one purpose: to destroy life.

No amount of washing keeps your hands free from the blood on the money of those "respectable murderers" who use the means that Jesus rejected.

BEN JIMENEZ, S.J.
Cleveland, Ohio

Risking Idolatry

I have always admired **America**'s constant and serious advocacy for peace and justice. But I am uneasy with the prominence and frequency of your ads for military chaplaincy. It is the Christian vocation most strongly promoted in the magazine.

I recognize that dedicated chaplains perform a valuable pastoral service in their one-to-one contact with members of the service. But the ambiguity of chaplaincy should be recognized. Reinhold Niebuhr described chaplains as having "mixed the worship of the God of love and the God of battles." Since they usually cannot proclaim, as Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador did, that loyalty to God may sometimes require a Christian to disobey unjust military orders, military chaplains run the risk of supporting the idolatry of exaggerated patriotism.

Why can't members of the armed forces take part in religious services in the town nearest to their base? As for those in combat situations: if they can justify their participation in the war, then they can be at peace with their conscience and their God, regardless of the immediate presence of a chaplain.

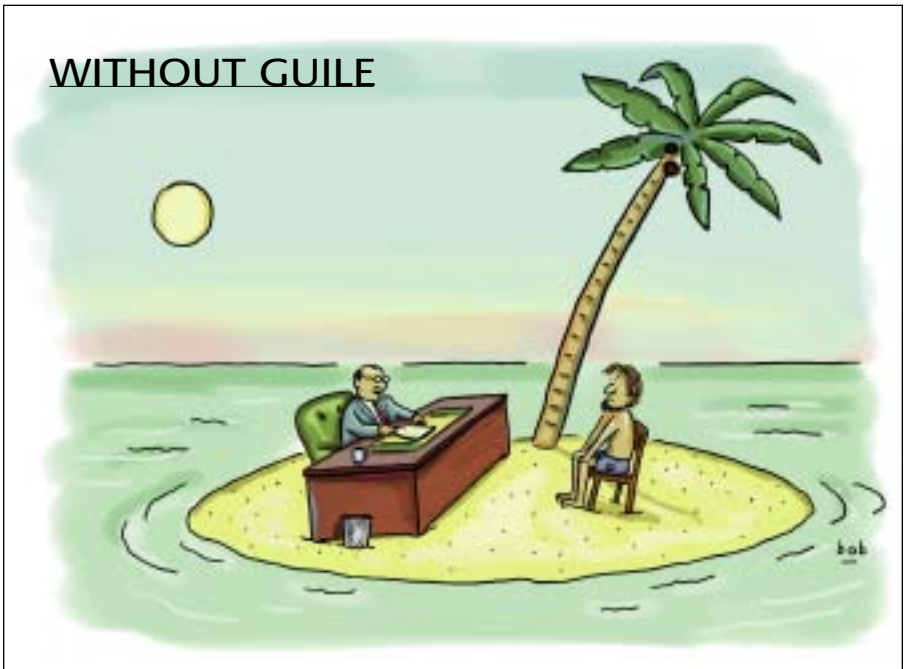
Perhaps **America** might consider the possibility of stating, "The content of ads in this magazine does not necessarily reflect the editorial view of the publisher."

JOSEPH E. MULLIGAN, S.J.
Managua, Nicaragua

Correction

I noticed in R. Bentley Anderson's fine review of Nadine Gordimer's latest novel, *No Time Like the Present* ("After Apartheid," 10/22), there is some mix-up in names. Jacob Zuma, the President of South Africa, is given his correct name originally, but at the end of the article he is referred to as Joseph Zuma. The leader of the African National Congress Youth League, Julius Malema, is called "Jacob Malema" on two occasions. Furthermore, Julius Malema is no longer the leader of the Youth League, as he was expelled from the A.N.C. earlier in the year for sowing division within the party.

JAMES McGLOIN, S.J.



"...and where do you see yourself in the next five years?"

CARTOON BY BOB ECKSTEIN

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Light in Darkness

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C), DEC. 16, 2012

Readings: Zep 3:14–18; Is 12:2–6; Phil 4:4–7; Lk 3:10–18

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! (Zep 3:14)

The Third Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday or Rejoice Sunday. On the Advent wreath it is marked by the pink candle. Our first two readings are filled with thoughts of joy. Zephaniah commands, "Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! ...The Lord, your God, is in your midst." Zephaniah prophesies that the Lord will renew his people in his love and will even "sing joyfully because of you." Likewise in our second reading from Philippians, Paul commands, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

Both passages emerge in the context of very challenging situations. Before King Josiah's reforms, the people of Judah were worshipping the gods Baal and Astarte even in the Temple. Zephaniah chastises Jerusalem: "Woe to the city, rebellious and polluted" (Zep 3:1). The Philippians are struggling as well. Paul had converted them and enjoyed their support in his missionary journeys. But the community is suffering from persecution or even possibly dissension (1:28–30) and from those twisting the Gospel, whom Paul calls dogs and evil workers (3:2). On top of that, Paul writes from prison in Ephesus and is so sick he thinks he may die (1:22–26).

From where does this joy, then, come? For Zephaniah it comes from God's plans for his people. "Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged," God proclaims. God's ultimate word is not condemnation, but exaltation. From Paul, it comes from the assurance of God's presence within. "Have no anxiety," Paul tells them. Rather, placing all before God, "prayer and petition," ensures the "peace of God that surpasses all understanding."

Trial and suffering are never goods in and of themselves. For people of faith, however, they can provide an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God. They force us to lean on God, to depend on God, to come to God stripped of all our pretentions and facades. In his horrifying and moving account of a Nazi concentration camp, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl realized something that surprised him: "In spite of all the enforced physical and mental primitiveness…it was possible for the spiritual life to deepen…. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret…The salvation of man is through love and in love…. For the first time in my life I was able to understand the meaning of the words, *The angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory*."

In the Gospel reading we find John the Baptist exhorting those who come to repent. His demands are, in a sense, modest: "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." To the tax collectors and soldiers, he simply commanded that they not use their positions of power to exploit others. John makes it clear that he is not the expected messiah: "I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

John's anticipation is the final fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecy. There will be purification and even judgment (fire) as well as glorious salvation (Holy Spirit). And they will both come from Christ. Zephaniah foresaw God among his people, a God who "sings joyfully" because of his people. Thanks be to God, he is now among us in Christ, and he gives us every reason to rejoice. What we prepare to commemorate at Christmas has actually happened. As Zephaniah commands, we should "shout for joy." Is it completed? We know that it is not. We still "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). And much of our faith journey is punctuated by suffering. Still, it is not a faith-walk absent from the salvation of the Lord, but one living in the Lord, where we can know the peace of God that goes beyond all understanding. It is ultimately in God that "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The challenge of living still in much darkness is less to cling to our salvation yet to come and more to recognize the conquering light in the midst of darkness.

PETER FELDMEIER

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Consider your greatest trial in life.
- Where is Christ's light there?
- Take time to rest in his love.

ART: TAD DUNNE

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

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