America

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Ministry Issue

The New, Lay Face of Missionaries
by Vincent Gragnani

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by Thomas P. Sweetser

Of Many Things

A LITERARY WAR ERUPTED some months ago. Dubbed the "battle of the book reviews," it pits book critics of print against electronic media/bloggers in a virtual slugfest. The issue is as much the quality of book reviews as space and quantity. That I have to report on it is a sad commentary about print media coverage—of works not only by well-known writers but by lesser known, upcoming writers, about whom readers would know little were it not for the occasional nod by a columnist who pays attention to what the small presses are up to.

Newspaper priorities have shifted markedly. The book section, simply put, does not generate revenue. So some papers have begun scaling back on coverage, shrinking and in some cases eliminating it altogether. In apportioning space for book news, as opposed, say, to sensational features, there will always be disparity. But at what cost? At a time when we should be promoting cultural literacy, this trend of shunning books and readers is all the more disturbing.

Since reviewers' pay scales (in the general press) often vary, that influences print coverage to some extent. Ditto for independent literary journals. As for **America**, our book section, which covers both general-interest and religious categories, introduces our readers to about 200 book titles each year.

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution recently eliminated its book review editor, shouts of protest arose from the National Book Critics Circle. Recent cutbacks have occurred at other national newspapers as well, including The Los Angeles Times, The Raleigh News and Observer and The Chicago Tribune. This shrinking coverage gives opportunity to bloggers and online "reviewers" to pick up the slack. And they do.

Michael Dirda, a Pulitzer Prize-winning book critic for The Washington Post commented in April on N.B.C.C.'s Web site: "If you were an author, would you want your book reviewed in The Washington Post and the New York Review of Books, or on a website written by someone who uses the moniker NovelGobbler or Biogafriend?" While that remark is a bit over the top, literary critics would agree with Dirda's overall assessment of the book review section as "the forum where new titles are taken seriously as works of art and argument…."

The National Book Critics Circle's campaign to restore (and even expand) print coverage is being waged with vigor. N.B.C.C.'s site "Critical Mass" posts comments from concerned readers almost daily.

Last year, more than 125,000 new books were born (and this year it is higher). But only a small fraction of them receive attention. Newspapers that have not eliminated reviews altogether have merged them into other sections of the paper (such as an opinion page) or moved them to another day. The Chicago Tribune, for example, is publishing its book reviews in the Saturday edition—so they now reach even fewer readers. The publishing industry's major venues for book coverage include Publishers Weekly, Kirkus Reviews, Booklist and Library Journal, the first two of which collectively review close to 10,000 adult and children's books a year. Unfortunately, these trade magazines are unavailable to most general readers and consumers.

In working through a shifting landscape of diverse and evolving outlets, conversation is vital. If the shared goal is one of service to readers (as it should be) provided by qualified reviewers, the reviewers and literary critics must remain committed. Serious readers will not usually be wooed by a handful of gossipy, self-serving book "commentators."

No one denies the Internet is here to stay, and members of the N.B.C.C. applaud the electronic opportunities for intelligent dialogue. The editor of Library Journal, Francine Fialkoff, noted in "Critical Mass" this spring that "the venues for discussion may be changing, but the need for them all remains. Whatever the outcome at the Atlanta-Journal Constitution and elsewhere," she concludes, "the N.B.C.C. campaign to save book sections in newspapers is a win-win for us all."

Still, we as a nation and especially we print journalists and editors have a moral obligation to foster literacy and promote intelligent reading. Maybe "the battle of the books" should be a unified rally of this nation's readers, writers, publishers and literati—a people's "campaign," so to speak.

Patricia A. Kossmann

America

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Advertising
Julia Sosa

106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019-3803
Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596.
E-mail: america@americamagazine.org;
letters@americamagazine.org.
Web site: www.americamagazine.org.
Customer Service: 1-800-627-9533.

Cover Joe Sherman, M.D., is pictured in a rural area near Cochabamba, Bolivia, where he and his wife serve with Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Photo courtesy of Maryknoll.

Articles

Stiff Upper Lip

The British are famous for their steadiness in the midst of crisis. Londoners had their finest hour as they endured the blitz in 1940 with the proverbial stiff upper lip. Over the past three decades they endured numerous terrorist bombings by the I.R.A. and the assassination of Lord Louis Mountbatten, a patriarch of the royal family, without panic. So it was no surprise that after two attempted bombings in Trafalgar Square and a third at Glasgow Airport in late June, in what is being called the doctors' plot, the Brits and the Scots went calmly about their business.

What might have been a surprise for Americans addicted to the news as the theater of crisis was Prime Minister Gordon Brown's first "Prime Minister's Time" in the House of Commons on July 2. Mr. Brown eschewed playing to emotions stirred by the terror attempts to present instead a detailed plan for updating British democracy. His plan would make the executive more accountable to Parliament and Parliament to the people, and would ask the people to be more responsible for their own affairs. He also invited Britain to adopt a bill of rights and a system of checks and balances that would curb government incursion into lives of its citizens. Americans—politicians, the public and the media—have a lot to learn from Mr. Brown's performance about how not to feed feelings of fright for the sake of heightened sensation. Following the recent series of attacks that may be linked to Al Qaeda, the prime minister refused to use the phrase "war on terror," and he insists that fighting terrorism will be a matter of conventional police, intelligence, community relations and diplomatic work.

Scientific Illiteracy

The Bush administration has been notorious for its abuse of science. Whether the issue is global warming, the impact of secondhand smoke on public health or supervision of the nation's nuclear stockpile, the administration has tried either to limit public access to information or to muzzle the nation's science advisory system. It was no surprise, then, that former Surgeon General Richard Carmona testified July 10 that, like his predecessors, he found himself gagged by his political superiors. "Anything that doesn't fit into the political appointees' ideological, theological or political agenda," he told a House oversight committee, "is often ignored, marginalized or simply buried." Dr. Carmona was correct to protest the know-nothing attitude of his superiors. At the same time, the notion he advanced that scientific advice is free from all taint of ideology is but the conventional wisdom of one party in the culture wars. From Leonardo da Vinci to Robert Oppenheimer, scientists have won their fortunes and their reputations in the military's employ.

As Peter Quinn explained in a recent Commonweal article (3/9), Darwinism spawned racism. Geneticists once backed eugenic sterilization of the retarded, and demographers have promoted compulsory population control for the poor. Sound public policy involves values as well as the data that advocates present as scientific findings. Science literacy requires knowing the difference. In the areas of sexuality and reproduction, with which Dr. Carmona was particularly concerned, the intermingling of the two is unavoidable. Unfortunately, in postmodern American culture, science policy is seldom informed by a searching philosophy, so setting the policy is left to hardball politics, whether of the judicial or executive variety.

Vanishing Birds

Many varieties of birds in the United States have been falling in number over the past few decades. In a June report, the Audubon Society pointed out that since 1967, the total bird population has dropped by 67 percent. Certain individual species, the report notes, "nosedived as much as 80 percent." Over the past half-century, farmland birds like the meadowlark, for example, have suffered the effects of suburban sprawl, industrial development, intensified farming practices and logging. Similarly, tundra-breeding birds are experiencing the destruction of their habitats as the permafrost melts and predators move in as a consequence of global warming.

How can the Audubon Society be sure of the losses it cites? Every year, across the country, thousands of volunteer "citizen scientists" assist in the organization's Christmas bird count from mid-December to early January.

The society lists several ways to slow these losses. Implementing sustainable forest management in the face of excessive logging, mining and drilling is one. Another is the promotion of sound agricultural policies that include protecting wetlands. And, finally, on a far wider scale, there is the need to struggle against global warming. Rachel Carson's 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, highlighted bird losses due to pesticides like DDT. Although DDT is no longer used in the United States, ill-considered housing and industrial development, together with disregard for the fragility of numerous bird species, gives the threat of extinction a new urgency.

Food Stamps

POLITICIANS PUSHING SHOPPING CARTS down supermarket aisles are not an ordinary sight. But some in public office have been doing just that in accepting a weeklong challenge to experience the difficulties of living on a food stamp allowance of barely more than one dollar per meal. This year Congress must make its five-year reauthorization of the farm bill, and food stamps are part of it. Oregon's Governor Theodore Kulongoski accepted the challenge and found, during a week of living on what food stamps could buy, that he went to bed earlier because he was more tired at the end of the day. Nor is he the only one to find that benefits at their present levels do not provide enough food to stave off weariness and provide adequate nutrition. The reason lies partly in the program's inadequate funding, which is largely a consequence of benefit cuts imposed by the 1996 welfare law. Reauthorization now offers Congress the chance to remedy that unacceptable situation. That a number of members of Congress have themselves accepted the food stamp challenge has heightened public awareness.

The Department of Agriculture uses its Thrifty Food Plan to determine how much money a low-income household needs for a nutritious diet. But as anti-hunger advocates point out, the dollar amount called for by this plan is higher than the average food stamp benefit. In reality many families run out before the end of the month. Low-income shoppers, moreover, have little choice but to buy calorie-dense foods that assuage hunger but can lead to obesity. The more nutritious foods tend to be more expensive. The situation is all the more worrisome because over half of food stamp recipients are children.

Only 60 percent of those eligible for food stamps receive them. The reason lies partly in the complex application process, which can be daunting, especially for people of limited education. Lack of outreach help is also part of the reason for the low enrollment. Another barrier to eligibility is the resources test. Resources (cash on hand, checking and savings accounts, for example) may not exceed $2,000, a limit that has remained unchanged for 21 years, with no adjustment for inflation. Advocates point out that the current limit is so low that households are practically forced into impoverishment before they can become eligible for food stamps. Reauthorization should include raising the resource limit.

Another needed change concerns legal immigrants, who are ineligible because of a mandatory five-year wait before they can apply. Legal immigrants should be given the same access to the program as U.S. citizens. Undocumented immigrants are never eligible, but their citizen children are. Because of language problems, however, and understandable fears of arrest and deportation, undocumented parents may be reluctant to apply for their children.

The farm bill's nutrition title includes the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The administration's 2008 budget calls for its elimination, which would end nutritional assistance for almost half a million seniors and thousands of low-income women and children. The program provides them with monthly food boxes of nutrient-rich foods like tuna fish and canned fruits and vegetables. According to the nonprofit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a food package costs the government less than $20 per participant.

ONE POSITIVE STEP is a bill introduced by Jim McGovern (Democrat of Massachusetts) and Jo Ann Emerson (Republican of Missouri), co-chairs of the House Hunger Caucus, both of whom accepted the one-week food stamp challenge. Their bill, the Feeding America's Family Act, co-sponsored by over 80 other members of Congress, would add $4 billion to the food stamp budget and thereby increase benefit levels. It would also lift the absurdly low minimum food stamp allowance of $10 a month, set in 1977 and never indexed for inflation, to $32 a month—an amount that could prompt a single adult living alone to make the effort to apply. Moreover, it would allow higher deductions for child care expenses. Not least, it would allow former felony drug offenders, who are currently ineligible, to receive food stamp benefits, surely a needed change that would help them in the difficult transition from prison back to their communities. Finally, it also proposes to alter restrictive asset rules by excluding a family's savings for education and retirement funds.

Reauthorization of the farm bill, with positive legislation of this kind folded in, offers a chance to reshape what the U.S. bishops' conference has called our broken agricultural policies. The food stamp program represents a part of those policies that is important if the goal is to be reached of reducing the number of people—35 million—who are estimated to be "food insecure." In a country as rich as the United States, no one should have to go hungry or suffer from malnutrition.

Pope Seeks to Unite Divided Chinese Catholics

In a groundbreaking letter to Chinese Catholics published on June 30, Pope Benedict XVI established new guidelines to favor cooperation between clandestine Catholic communities and those officially registered with the government. The papal letter strongly criticized the limits placed by the Chinese government on the church's activities. But on several key issues, including the appointment of bishops, it invited civil authorities to a fresh and serious dialogue. The 55-page letter was accompanied by a Vatican Press Office commentary that reiterated the Vatican's willingness to move its nunciature from Taiwan to Beijing, as soon as diplomatic relations are established with China. The letter was posted on the Vatican's Web site in several languages, including traditional and modern Chinese, and had been sent earlier to Chinese authorities as a courtesy. Throughout the text, the pope expressed his appreciation for the suffering of Chinese Catholics under Communism. He said their devotion to the faith and their loyalty to the pope "will be rewarded, even if at times everything can seem a failure."

Polish Radio Priest Faces Jail for Insult

A Redemptorist priest who runs Poland's largest Catholic broadcast agency faces a possible jail sentence after describing Polish President Lech Kaczynski as "a crook subservient to the Jewish lobby." Prosecutors in Torun, where Radio Maryja is based, said they would consider charges against the Rev. Tadeusz Rydzyk under a criminal code clause that calls for three years in jail for insulting the head of state. The priest denied making the remarks and insisted he was the victim of "another provocation."

The Redemptorist province in Warsaw said July 9 it had set up a team to make a "proper analysis of the existing situation" after the Wprost, a weekly, published a transcript of Father Rydzyk's alleged statement to a student meeting during which he also called Poland's first lady, Maria, a "witch." The British news agency Reuters reported July 10 that the priest is heard on a tape of the meeting criticizing the president, his brother and his wife for supporting limited abortion rights. "The first lady with this euthanasia.... You witch, I'll let you have it. If you want to kill people, do it to yourself first," Reuters reported the priest as saying on the tape. Kaczynski urged the church July 10 to take action against Father Rydzyk, saying insults aimed at Poland's leaders were a matter of government-church relations.

Meanwhile the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles released a letter July 16 signed by 600 Polish Catholic intellectuals condemning Father Rydzyk for his anti-Semitism.

China Reserves Right to Elect, Ordain Bishops

The Rev. Joseph Li Shan was elected by the Diocese of Beijing, China, to succeed Beijing Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan, who died in April.

A Catholic lay leader from Beijing said China will continue to "self-elect and self-ordain" bishops. "We ordain bishops only for the sake of evangelization in the mainland. Nobody can stop us," said Anthony Liu Bainian, vice chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which acts as a liaison between the Chinese government and Catholic churches that have registered with the government. Liu told the Asian church news agency UCA News July 3 that it is up to Rome to recognize these bishops. Pope Benedict XVI's June 30 letter to the Catholic community in China described the self-elected and self-ordained bishops in China as "validly ordained." But it said certain bishops among them "lack a pontifical mandate" and are to be considered "illegitimate." Usually the elected bishop candidate would apply to the Vatican for approval after his episcopal election in China. In some cases the Vatican did not give its approval, but "the fault lies not with China," Liu said, noting that he had read the papal letter three times and found it comprehensive.

Polish Church Commission Issues Report on Bishops

One in seven of Poland's 132 Catholic bishops was registered as a secret police informer under Communist rule, but the scope of their involvement has not been fully established, said a Polish church commission. "Up to 20 were registered by communist Poland's security organs as secret collaborators, operational contacts or information sources, and one as an intelligence agent, while several were registered as potential recruits," the commission said in a June 27 statement. "The secret police archive material presented to our commission on clergy who became bishops is incomplete and chaotic," the commission reported. "It does not allow us to establish properly the scope, intensity and ultimate harmfulness of their real and conscious collaboration." The commission, which includes four priests and two lay professors, was set up by the Polish bishops' conference in October. It presented its report to the bishops June 21. Archbishop Slawoj Glodz of Warsaw-Praga, liaison to the commission, said at a June 27 press conference in Warsaw that a final report would be handed to church leaders in the fall and passed on to the Vatican.

Pope Allows Wider Use of Tridentine Mass

In a long-awaited overture to disaffected Catholic traditionalists, Pope Benedict XVI relaxed restrictions on the use of the Tridentine Mass, the Latin-language liturgy that predates the Second Vatican Council. The pope said Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Roman Missal, commonly known as the Tridentine rite, should be made available in every parish where groups of the faithful desire it. He said that while the new Roman Missal, introduced in 1970, remains the ordinary way of Catholic worship, the 1962 missal should be considered "the extraordinary expression of the same law of prayer." "They are, in fact, two usages of the one Roman rite," he said.

The pope's directive came July 7 in a four-page apostolic letter titled *Summorum Pontificum*. The new norms will take effect Sept. 14, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. An accompanying explanatory letter from the pontiff to the world's bishops dismissed fears that the decree would foment divisions in the church or be seen as a retreat from the Second Vatican Council. The pope said the new Mass rite undoubtedly would remain the church's predominant form of worship.


um Dominum nostrum, súpplices rogá
culatur altare, et iunctis manibus
i accépta hábeas, et benedícas signa
et calicem simul, dicens: hæc ✝ d
hæc ✝ sancta sacrifícia illibáta, ex
equitur: in primis, quæ tibi offéri
sancta cathólica: quam pacificáre,
t régere dignéris toto orbe

Text from the eucharistic prayer of the Roman Missal of 1962

U.S. Bishops: Pope Shows Pastoral Care for Faithful

U.S. church leaders cautioned against what one called "early and false conclusions" about Pope Benedict XVI's July 7 document expanding the use of the Tridentine Mass and said it should be seen primarily as an affirmation of the importance of reverential participation in the Mass, whether in its ordinary or extraordinary form. Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit said the apostolic letter *Summorum Pontificum* showed the pope's "pastoral care for those members of the faithful who desire to worship God" with the Mass according to the 1962 Roman Missal, commonly known as the Tridentine rite. But he said Pope Benedict's decision to allow priests to celebrate the earlier form of the Mass without their bishop's prior permission should not be seen "as calling into question the abiding significance of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council" but as a continuation of Pope John Paul II's efforts to reach out "to those who felt alienated from the church because of the exclusive use of the postconciliar ritual." Bishop David A. Zubik (newly appointed to Pittsburgh) wrote on July 7 to the priests and faithful of Green Bay, Wis., that they must "be careful not to arrive at early and false conclusions" about the apostolic letter. "Most importantly, I wish to state emphatically that the Mass is not changing," he wrote.

Truth, Oneness of Catholic Church Reaffirmed

In a brief document, the Vatican's doctrinal congregation reaffirmed that the Catholic Church is the one, true church, even if elements of truth can be found in separated churches and communities. Touching an ecumenical sore point, the document said some of the separated Christian communities, such as Protestant communities, should not properly be called "churches" according to Catholic doctrine because of major differences over the ordained priesthood and the Eucharist.

The Vatican released the text July 10. Titled *Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church*, it was signed by U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and approved by Pope Benedict XVI before publication.

In a cover letter, Cardinal Levada asked the world's bishops to do all they can to promote and present the document to the wider public.

Papal Medal Awarded to Former ICEL Official

At a parish Sunday Mass at Holy Trinity Church, Washington, D.C., on July 1, Bishop Donald W. Trautman of Erie, Pa., chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, presented John R. Page with the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal. Msgr. Anthony Sherman, incoming director of the liturgy secretariat, assisted Bishop Trautman during the presentation ceremony. John Page was honored for his service to the liturgical life of the church throughout the English-speaking world.

Mr. Page was a member of the staff of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy from 1972 to 2002, and served as its executive secretary for 22 years. ICEL was established by the bishops' conferences during the Second Vatican Council. It was given a mandate by those conferences to prepare the English editions of the liturgical books, as revised at the direction of the council.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

Sister of Charity Receives Award From Yad Vashem

Gemma Del Luca

A Catholic nun from Pennsylvania is the first non-Jew and non-Israeli to receive Yad Vashem's Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education. Sister Gemma del Duca, a Sister of Charity and former chair of the history department at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pa., has been leading seminars for Holocaust education with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial for two decades. The seminars, started on her initiative, are intended for groups of Catholic educators and clergy, primarily from the United States. According to Yad Vashem, hundreds of educators have taken part in the seminars. A native of Greensburg, Pa., Sister Gemma has been living in Israel since 1975, and she approached Yad Vashem with her idea in 1987 in response to Pope John Paul II's call to recognize the significance of the Holocaust. Sister Gemma "is the person who opened the door here to bringing Catholic educators to Yad Vashem," said Ephraim Kaye, who works with international educators at Yad Vashem.

Mahony Apologizes, Settles Abuse Cases

The Los Angeles Archdiocese announced on July 15 the largest church settlement of sexual abuse lawsuits to date, agreeing to pay more than 500 victims a total of $660 million. Before noon the next day, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Haley Fromholz had approved the settlement, calling it "the right result." Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles again offered his personal apology to all victims of sexual abuse by a priest, religious, deacon or layperson in the archdiocese. "It is the shared hope of everyone in our local church that these victims, many of whom suffered in silence for decades, may find a measure of healing and some sense of closure with today's announcement," he said in a statement July 15. "Although financial compensation in itself is inadequate to make up for the harm done to the victims and their families, still this compensation does provide a meaningful outreach to assist the victims to rebuild their lives and to move forward," he said.

Greek Orthodox, Catholics Urge Pursuit of Unity

Leaders of San Francisco's Catholic and Greek Orthodox communities urged adherents of their traditions to continue pursuing mutual understanding and unity during an ecumenical "litany for peace." Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Gerasimos and Catholic Archbishop George H. Niederauer capped an evening of sacred music and readings featuring themes of peace and reconciliation June 28 at St. Dominic Parish in San Francisco by lighting in unison the final candle of a candelabrum that had served as a symbol of growing unity during the evening. Between choral offerings, two pairs of youngsters—one Greek Orthodox, one Catholic—had walked to the altar area and each lit a candle on either side of the candelabrum.

Knights of Columbus Set Record for Giving, Service

The Knights of Columbus, the largest lay Catholic organization in the world, has announced that it set new records for charitable giving and volunteer service in 2006. Data from the order's annual survey of fraternal activity showed that total contributions to charities reached close to $144 million. The amount exceeded the previous year's donations by more than $4 million. Of this total, the supreme council donated about $35 million; donations from other councils amounted to more than $108 million. The number of volunteer hours given by Knights for charitable causes totalled more than 68 million. Many volunteer hours were spent helping in the Gulf region after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Soon after the hurricanes, the Knights donated more than $10 million to relief efforts and continued to make donations of time and money to those affected by the hurricanes through 2006.

DENVER HOSTS FAMILY LIFE MINISTERS. Attendees listen to a presentation at the annual meeting of the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers in Denver June 27. More than 200 participants from dioceses and churches across the country attended workshops and presentations delving into challenges and opportunities in their field of pastoral ministry.

Newark Remembers

'The city exploded 40 years ago in a...what?'

FIVE MILES from my living room, in a world about which I know very little, men and women are gathering in a public space in downtown Newark, N.J., to commemorate the 40th anniversary of a riot.

The city of Newark exploded 40 years ago this month. It exploded because of a rumor—a cabdriver, it was said, had died in police custody. The cab driver was black; the police, white. Newark in 1967 was a majority black city ruled by white politicians seemingly indifferent to rampant discrimination and injustice. A depressing if not unfamiliar tale from the 1960s.

A black cabbie had indeed been taken into a stationhouse that night, and for good reason—he was driving recklessly. But as the false report of his death at police hands made its way through the city on a hot summer's night, an angry crowd gathered outside the stationhouse. Some in the crowd began looting nearby stores.

The National Guard and state police, woefully unprepared, were dispatched to downtown Newark. Parks were turned into staging areas. City streets were crowded with armored military vehicles. Newark was quite literally under siege. Within a week, parts of the city were in ashes; and all these years later, all that has risen from those ashes is despair.

It seems an odd series of events to commemorate, but Newark is doing so all the same. The rest of the summer will feature exhibits and lectures in museums, libraries and other public spaces. Newspapers, magazines and the Public Broadcasting System have contributed to the discussion with retrospectives and debates.

Civic commemorations are usually associated with more positive events: a proud milestone, the anniversary of a notable achievement or the celebration of a life worthy of imitation. In Newark, however, the subject being commemorated is a riot. Or is it? Some of the celebrants, if that is the right word, insist that no riot took place during a terrible week in July 1967. In fact, it was an uprising, a rebellion. The words are meant to convey something noble, something inspired by a cause. Others are perfectly comfortable with the more judgmental description, for in their eyes, what they witnessed in Newark 40 years ago was an explosion of criminal behavior—a riot. Politicians generally choose a middle ground. They call it a "disturbance."

More than two dozen people are not in a position to call it anything. They were killed in the uprising, the riot, the disturbance. Most of the victims were African-Americans; most were innocent of any wrongdoing; most were killed by state police or National Guard.

The commemorations in Newark have national implications, because the conversation underway in that city is a foreshadowing of a larger conversation we will have next year. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were murdered 40 years ago next spring. Cities went up in flames after King's murder. In Chicago, antiwar demonstrators tried to lay siege to the Democratic National Convention, and were assailed in turn by law-enforcement officers. Throughout the country, young people protested what they saw as a pointless, wasteful and even criminal war in Vietnam.

Next year, middle-aged men and women will gather to talk about the awful year of 1968, and then we will all understand what Newark is trying to achieve this summer. It used to be, I suppose, that 40th anniversaries weren't very different from 39th anniversaries. But ever since Europe and the United States so memorably commemorated the 40th anniversary of D-Day in 1984, 40 has become the new 50, to coin a phrase. The actuarial tables offer a hint about how and why this change has come about: People with grown-up memories of an event often do not make it to the 50th anniversary. For the sake of posterity, then, the 40th anniversary of event has become an important marker.

So it is for Newark this summer, and so it will be for the nation next year. There will be renewed discussion of what 1968 and the '60s in general meant, and whether anything has really changed. That is precisely the conversation under way in Newark. It's a good conversation, even when it becomes heated, as it has done. It is a good conversation because any conversation is better than embittered silence.

So in Newark, they talk about a riot, and talk about whether it was a riot at all. If that seems odd, then so be it. But it will not be the last odd conversation about the trauma of the 1960s, nor should it be.

Forty years after the massive protests against a faraway war, we find ourselves in another one. Issues of race, of equality, of opportunity, of neglect are with us still. Schools are segregated not by law but in practice. African-Americans have joined the middle class in great numbers, but inner-city poverty is as grinding as ever.

Voices in Newark say that nothing has changed since 1967, although that is absurd. The city clearly changed for the worse as the middle-class, black and white, moved to surrounding towns like mine. Lately things have improved with new investment and the election of a mayor with no ties to the city's corrupt old machine, but still, progress is measured in inches rather than in miles.

The conversation in Newark will continue, and then the rest of us will join in next year. Sadly, there will be far too many parallels between 1968 and 2008. But that is certainly worth a conversation or two.

Terry Golway

TERRY GOLWAY is the curator of the John Kean Center for American History at Kean University in Union, N.J.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYKNOLL

Joe Sherman, M.D., demonstrates the use of his stethoscope in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

The New, Lay Face of Missionaries

– BY VINCENT GRAGNANI –

FOR MANY CATHOLICS, the word missionary brings to mind a centuries-old image of a priest planting a cross in a foreign land and teaching, baptizing and celebrating Mass for its people. Or it may conjure up the slightly more modern image of women religious running a school in Africa or Latin America. One of the last images to come to mind, however, is that of a young family living and working with the poor. As the number of priests and religious in ministry around the globe declines, the number of lay people doing mission work increases.

VINCENT GRAGNANI is a New Jersey-based editor who reports on contemporary Catholic issues for a number of Catholic magazines.

The development should not be new to Catholics in the United States, where lay people distribute Communion at Mass, staff Catholic schools, even lead Sunday Communion services in thousands of communities without resident priests—roles traditionally filled by priests and religious. Yet because lay missionaries work in other countries and continents, the average American Catholic does not see them.

Meet Joe and Becky Sherman. The Shermans are raising their two children, six-year-old Josh and three-year-old Celia, in a rural area near Cochabamba, Bolivia. Having spent nearly two years in Uganda with a program through Johns Hopkins University, the couple knew that after they had children they would return overseas, preferably with a faith-based organization. They learned all they could before making a commitment to serve with Maryknoll Lay Missioners.

"Life in Uganda was hard," says Becky Sherman. "Maryknoll has experience with families—lots of experience—so we wouldn't go through it alone as a family. Maryknoll's values of accompaniment, living out Gospel values and living in community were amazing to us," she continues. "We could live abroad, with a ready-made Catholic community who would walk with us through the difficult times we knew we would have." Joe Sherman, 47, now a medical doctor with a degree also in bioengineering, works as a pediatrician and Becky, 38, as a child clinical psychologist, while their blond-haired, blue-eyed children attend a neighborhood school.

"Although they realize they are different, there is no value judgment," Becky says of her children. "Their best buddies live in very impoverished conditions, and our kids are fine with that and in such a beautiful way."

The Shermans' commitment with Maryknoll expires in 2009, at which time, says Becky, they are not likely to renew for another three years. The family's future plans include settling back into their house in the United States and perhaps serving short stints in Africa during the children's summer vacations. "It is very important for me that my kids know where they are from and where they will move back to," she says. "I want them to know that they have a 'home.' Seattle is our home." (You can read more about the Shermans' experience at www.familysherman.com.)

Communicating the Lay Mission Experience

As they seek funding and new missionaries, the people involved in sustaining the missions say, "Some give by going to mission, others go by giving to mission; and without both, there is no mission." The problem scores of Catholic lay missionary organizations are facing, however, is that Catholics cannot support a ministry they do not know exists. The goal is to get the word out. Today Catholic lay missionaries serve as educators, health care workers, counselors and administrators around the world. Yet a lack of funds—not a lack of people—prevents the organizations they serve from growing. To support these new missionaries, the Catholics in the pews must exchange their old image for a new one: that of laypersons living in solidarity with non-Christians and fledgling local churches in all parts of the world.

As Pope John Paul II wrote 17 years ago in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, "It is necessary to recognize—and it is a title of honor—that some churches owe their origins to the activity of lay men and women missionaries." "Whereas the foundation of a new church requires the Eucharist and hence the priestly ministry," he continued, "missionary activity, which is carried out in a wide variety of ways, is the task of all the Christian faithful."

Lay mission work actually has ancient roots. Pope Pius XII recalled the essential role of early Christian lay missionaries and encouraged his lay listeners to do the same: "All know that the Gospel followed the great Roman roads and was spread not only by bishops and priests but also by public officials, soldiers and private citizens," he wrote (*Evangelii Praecones*, 1951).

The Holy Spirit spoke, and the laity listened. Fifty-six years after Pius XII wrote those words, the lay groups founded by religious communities and affiliated with them are thriving. Maryknoll Lay Missioners counts 137 now working in 17 countries, plus scores who have served previously. Franciscan Mission Service has sent more than 200 missionaries since it was founded in 1990. The St. Vincent Pallotti Center, an organization that assists Catholic lay missionaries, also publishes *Connections*, an annual directory of more than 100 faith-based volunteer programs with placements in the United States and overseas. The center's director, Andrew Thompson, recalls that in the 20 years he has spent working for the Pallotti Center, the number of Catholic organizations supporting lay missionaries has more than doubled.

The Catholic Network of Volunteer Services publishes *Response*, a booklet that lists hundreds of volunteer opportunities for lay people. By the network's estimate, more than 10,000 volunteers and lay missioners serve in these programs throughout the United States and in 108 other countries, though many of the organizations support short-term programs (often less than a year). By contrast, groups like Maryknoll Lay Missioners ask for a commitment of at least one to three years.

Diedra Barlow teaches physiotherapy at the Dhulikhel Medical Institute, affiliated with Kathmandu University in Nepal. Her journey in the mission world began with a four-week volunteer program in Calcutta in 1993. After additional short-term volunteer experiences in Nepal and India, Barlow began to realize that her short-term volunteering

was becoming long-term. When two lay missionary organizations accepted her, Barlow chose Maryknoll because it was looking for someone to work in Asia. "I have often said that while I made the right decision, I may have done so for the wrong reason," Barlow says. "But it was indeed the right decision. I believe in Maryknoll Lay Missioner's stated mission, vision and core values."

A physical therapist by training, Barlow finds educating the Nepalese challenging. "Very few students have good study habits and seek to memorize facts in preparation for exams," she says. "Convincing the students that that is not how we operate at D.M.I. is indeed a challenge." But, like most missionaries, she says the rewards—watching the students grow over the years into mature physiotherapists who will reach hundreds of Nepalis—far outweigh the challenges.

CNS PHOTO BY BOB ROLLER

Heidi Ann Cerneka, a U.S. Maryknoll lay missionary who works with the Brazilian bishops' Prison Pastoral Office, gave testimony in March to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington, D.C., on conditions in Brazilian prisons for women.

Barlow has been with Maryknoll Lay Missioners for seven years, four of them in Thailand and three in Nepal. The 62-year-old missionary does not know whether she will continue when her contract expires in two years. "Returning to active clinical practice upon my return to the United States is probably not in the cards, but I have not seriously considered what other options might be available," she says. "I have always said that as long as there is a need that I can fulfill and as long as I remain in good health, I would consider remaining in mission. Certainly, being in mission is transforming."

Purpose and Challenges

While the attitude of missionaries, both lay and vowed religious, has shifted in the last 50 years from what one may call paternalism to solidarity, the overall goal remains the same, at least in theory. "The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization,

and the planting of the church among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root," states the Second Vatican Council's "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity." But missionary work is not confined to non-Christian parts of the world. The decree acknowledges that churches suffering from a lack of priests and material support "are badly in need of the continued missionary activity of the whole church to furnish them with those subsidies which serve for the growth of the local church, and above all for the maturity of Christian life. This mission action should also furnish help to those churches, founded long since, which are in a certain state of regression or weakness."

Lay mission organizations are much younger than most religious communities, and they are also smaller. But increasingly, and not always by choice, they are beginning to stand on their own, a difficult feat after having been supported by religious communities for decades. As health care and retirement costs increase for aging religious communities, their ability to support separate lay organizations declines. While some call this unfair, because in many cases the religious communities sit on millions of dollars in real estate and investments not yet being fully used, others call it a reasonable challenge.

"We're facing the challenges most typical nonprofits face," said Kevin Mestrich, executive director of Maryknoll Lay Missioners. "The fact that we've never faced them before made us a privileged organization. We've had to restructure ourselves into a more sustainable framework for operations. That means adding marketing and communications. The fact that we didn't have to do it for a number of years didn't mean it wasn't being done. It was—by our parent organization. Now we're responding to a changed environment."

The environment has indeed changed. According to its 2005 annual report, $2.2 million of Maryknoll Lay Missioners' $8.2 million budget (less than a quarter) came from a grant from Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and Maryknoll Sisters. Ten years ago the lay missioners were fully supported by Maryknoll Priests and Brothers.

Much of the lay missioners' revenue goes directly to mission work. Maryknoll offers lay missioners an orientation program in Ossining, N.Y., travel expenses to the mission destination, health insurance, housing and a personal allowance (usually $200 per month). Like many businesses, Maryknoll also provides its volunteers with a retirement plan. Financial constraints have limited each year's outgoing class of lay missioners to 12. Though Maryknoll Lay Missioners has not had to turn away qualified missioners because of its financial situation, it has significantly decreased its recruitment efforts to prevent such an eventuality. And Maryknoll is one of the larger, more established

organizations of lay Catholic missionaries.

Good Shepherd Volunteers

Compare Maryknoll to Good Shepherd Volunteers, a 16-year-old domestic and international lay mission program affiliated with the Good Shepherd Sisters. Though much smaller in size (Good Shepherd Volunteers sends two to four lay missionaries each year) they face many of the same challenges.

After graduating with a degree in religion, philosophy and Spanish from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, Abbie Kretz pursued an opportunity to serve in Peru with Good Shepherd Volunteers. She arrived in Lima in August 2005 and spent her first months working at a home for teenage girls. "The girls swear, yell at you, hate you one day, love you the next, ask you very personal questions, manipulate you, rob you, whatever they want," she says. "Honestly, I had no desire to work with adolescents—and I still don't think that's for me—but they started to get under my skin. I learned how to work with them and manage them, and we learned a lot about each other. They still had their attitudes and everything else, but I just became used to them."

A year later, Kretz joined Good Shepherd Sisters in ministering to sexually exploited women in an area of Lima "filled with prostitution, gangs, poverty, drug addicts, pimps and police," she says. Kretz, 24, ventures out to talk with the women and invite them to a center run by the sisters. "Sometimes they don't want to hear a thing from you as they're 'working,' or they may open up to you and share their life stories with you," says Kretz. "The environment in those areas is completely ugly and most times unsafe. But I feel more apt for this job. It's something I like and that I think I have a gift for." Kretz's term with Good Shepherd Volunteers expires in July. Her plans may include graduate school in law or economics and perhaps working abroad for a nongovernmental organization on women's issues or education.

Good Shepherd Volunteers is headed by Michele Gilfillan, who notes that the organization was founded not as a way to recruit new sisters, but by forward-thinking women religious who saw their own numbers shrinking and wanted to ensure that their work and their charism survived. Though not a trained fund-raiser, Gilfillan's résumé includes marketing, community development and advocacy for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office for Human Relations and Catholic Relief Services. When she took the reins three years ago from the program's founding director, Gilfillan was charged with three tasks: to strengthen the international lay mission program, to develop the board of directors and to diversify revenue sources. Good Shepherd Volunteers receives 65 percent of its $250,000 annual budget from the Good Shepherd Sisters. Volunteers are asked to raise close to $5,000 to help defray costs. Gilfillan is working to diversify revenue sources through direct mail appeals, developing relationships with former volunteers and seeking grants from foundations.

A Hard Sell?

As grant money from affiliated religious communities dries up, some in lay mission organizations wish the church hierarchy at all levels—priests, diocesan mission office directors, bishops, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Vatican—would do more to promote awareness of lay missionaries.

"In an ideal world, American Catholics would be very interested in their connection to people around the world and more supportive of those able to help," said Stephen Price, part of the leadership team of S.M.A. Lay Missioners, an organization affiliated with the Society of African Missions.

At the diocesan level, the task of promoting the value of lay missionaries typically falls to a missions office director. Sometimes a part-timer, sometimes a full-timer, the director typically coordinates the Society of the Propagation of the Faith and Holy Childhood Association on the local level. For most mission office directors, promoting lay mis-

sions is not a high priority, especially since many directors must juggle the mission office job with a parish pastoral assignment and other responsibilities. For some, though, promoting the laity is a priority and a passion.

A former Maryknoll lay missioner now working on his doctorate in missiology, Michael Gable has headed the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's missions office for six years.

"Five hundred years of one image of missionary doesn't turn around overnight," he said. "It is harder to sell," Gable said of lay mission work. "These people 'only' make a four-year commitment. Part of my job is to say that these people have made contributions and continue to make contributions when they come back to the United States. They bring expertise into their parishes, schools and workplaces."

One of the easiest ways for mission office directors to increase parish awareness is to bring lay missioners to speak at parishes. Every year, missionary groups apply to dioceses around the United States for a chance to speak during the summer and receive a special collection at Mass. Of the 175 to 200 applications Gable receives every year, approximately 70 are from communities of vowed religious, 70 are from overseas dioceses and 10 are from lay organizations. Fewer applications come from lay groups, because not many of them have a budget to send speakers across the country, Gable explained. Out of the 100 groups who spoke in 2006 at 283 parishes in Los Angeles, the nation's most populous archdiocese, only five were lay missionary groups.

It is clear from any set of statistics one examines, from the rising age and declining number of priests, to the hundreds of Catholics willing to be missionaries even without being actively recruited, that the future of missionary work—like the future of Catholic education, health care and social ministry—lies with the laity. If the ministry is going to thrive, Catholics in the pews must understand and respond. "The Propagation of the Faith office can be a powerful means for helping people in the pews recognize that laity are responsible for doing the church's missionary work," said the Pallotti Center's Andrew Thompson. "They're not just little helpers for priests and religious groups." Most missionaries would agree.

Missionary work would be more fruitful, said S.M.A. Lay Missioners' Stephen Price, "if our church could formally recognize the value of lay missionaries as they have with clerical and religious missionaries, if that could be made more prominent in church documents or its arrangements for financing." Price noted that though S.M.A. Lay Missioners are funded by S.M.A. fathers, the priests have warned the lay group that their grants would be diminishing. "Priests have been quite generous, but when all of that is on our own shoulders, it will be hard. All groups are facing this and trying to address it together," he said. "I don't think we've come up with an answer yet." A

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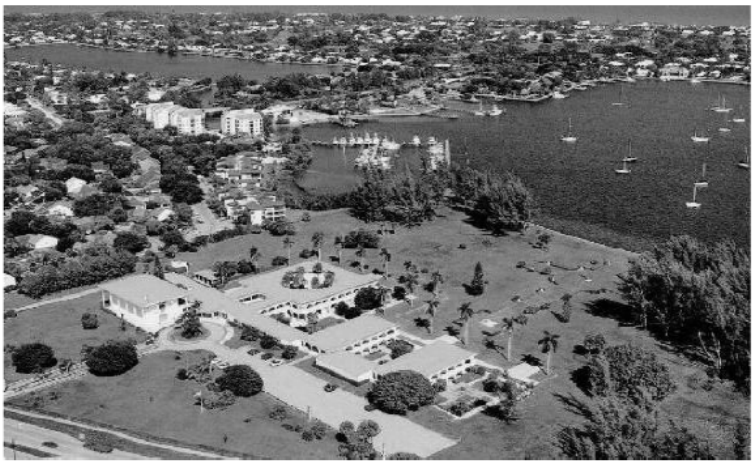

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Dr. Pat Fosarelli is a physician, a theologian, and a lay minister. She received a M.D. from the University of Maryland, a M.A. in Theology from St. Mary's Seminary and a D.Min. from Wesley Theological Seminary. She teaches spirituality and practical theology at the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's and pediatrics at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She has authored several books, including the *Family Ministry Desk Reference*. A recipient of multiple teaching awards, Dr. Fosarelli frequently addresses both lay and religious audiences.

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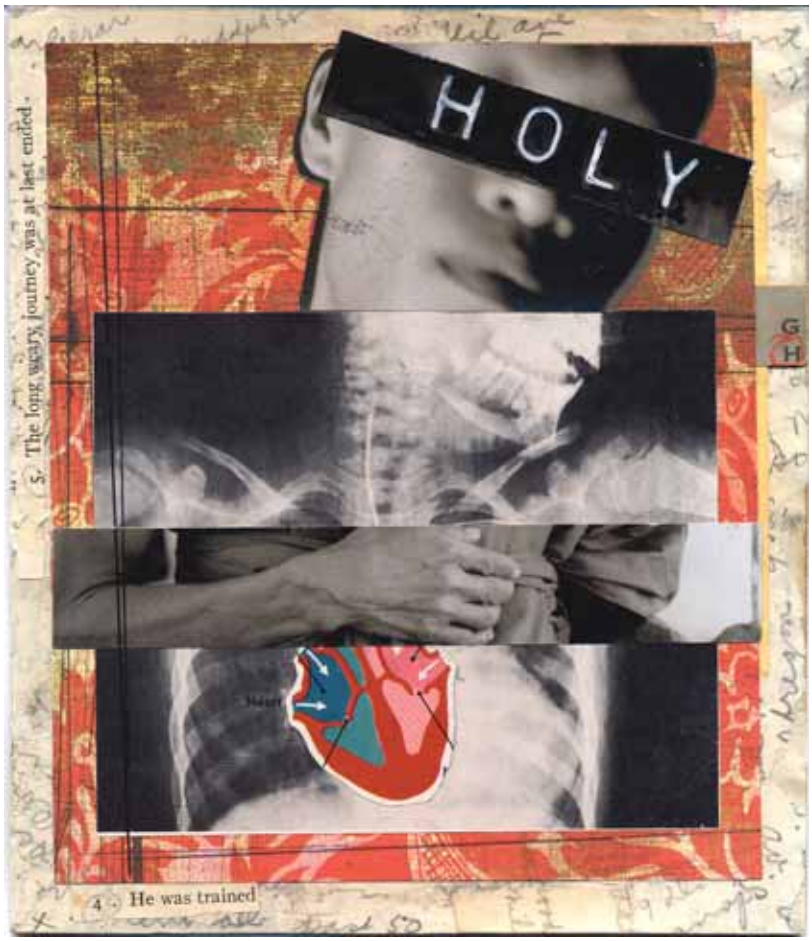
It takes effort.

BY WILLIAM J. O'MALLEY



THE SENIORS I TEACH would cringe at being called holy. The very word secretes poisons like "uninteresting," "sexless," "goody-goody," "unsophisticated"—hardly the path to popularity. Nor does the idea appeal much to older people either. They feel unworthy of a term justified only by a visible halo. Popes can canonize a married couple, but only after 13 children and late-life vows of celibacy.

Our ideas of holiness are so stringent that even aspiring to it seems presumptuous. Jesus faced that, too: "'What is this wisdom that has been given him? Isn't this the carpenter's son?'" (Matt 13:55). Even slight contact with the less-than-sacred sullies any suggestion of sanctity: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them!" (Luke 15:3). But here is the key: Jesus loves imperfect people. On that score, all of us qualify. We can, therefore, consider holiness without the distancing, antiseptic "requirements" that make the subject, and pursuit of the reality, inaccessible to ordinary mortals.

Ease the Qualifications for Holiness

Easing the qualifications seems justified, since the Scriptures abound with exhortations not just to the few but to the many to strive for holiness. "Be holy" (Lev 20:7; Num 15:40; 1 Pet 1:15, 16.); "Without holiness no one shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14); "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3). St. Paul's Greek term for ordinary believers is *hagioi*, "saints, holy ones"—not just meticulously purified souls, but all believers, made holy. It is not we who qualify as holy, but Christ's generous acceptance of us that negates our unworthiness.

All religious traditions emphasize the separateness of the holy from the everyday. Whatever they call the ultimate reality is totally apart from anything common, profane, unclean, evil. Jews and Muslims tolerate no pictures of God, lest these devolve into idols. The Reformation ransacked cathedrals and village chapels to purge them of statues and crucifixes; even the consecrated elements of the Eucharist were de-sanctified. Eastern faiths go so far as to insist no predicate is appropriate for the Deity, not even "loving" or "intelligent." Indeed, not even "is." Thus, whatever we assert about God seems closer to falsehood than truth.

In the Abrahamic tradition, God is utterly other than anything created: "I am God and no man, the Holy One in your midst" (Hos 11:9). Yet God still walked companionably in Eden with Adam and Eve. There was separateness but also an easygoing connection—until the fateful moment the creatures said, "Who needs you?" And every human since has, in infinitely varied ways, shared that severing arrogance. Seeking holiness means trying to heal that separation and regain that person-to-Person friendship that makes us holy once again. The very word "religion," in fact, means connection.

ART BY MICHAEL ALTMAN

WILLIAM J. O'MALLEY, S.J., is a teacher of English and religious studies at Fordham Preparatory School in the Bronx, N.Y.

Incarnation Is Key

A constitutive element of Christianity (in contrast to all other faiths) is the incarnation. Uniquely, the Christian God became completely enmeshed in the material world: "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14). Jesus did not think himself defiled by what his co-religionists judged unclean—neglecting ritual washing or consorting with people considered corruptive (prostitutes, lepers, Samaritans). It is also a basic Christian assertion that except for sin, God became in Christ fully human. That means Jesus underwent bodily demands some would consider too degrading for God.

It would also follow that since of all species, only humans suffer doubt, Jesus had to face the insecurity of commitment to choices without certitude. If not, the temptations in the desert could not have been truly seductive, with no possibility of choosing wrongly. Further, the agony in the garden, where he sweated blood in terror, would have been impossible with full access to a divine intelligence that suffers no uncertainty. On the cross, when he shouted, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46), he could only have been quoting a psalm, not gripped by genuine temptation to despair. Without experiencing authentic uncertainty, Jesus could not have shared that most difficult burden of being human.

There is at least an explanation, though it might not convince all. St. Paul writes that at the incarnation, the son "emptied himself" (Phil 2:7). He did not stop being God, but though he remained fully divine, he surrendered all divine perquisites, like omniscience and omnipotence, in order to face life's challenges just like the rest of us.

Jesus' Invitation to All

Jesus' invitation to the kingdom—to a personal relationship with God here and now—was in no way restricted to the special few. In the parable, when the original guests declined, the host ordered: "Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in" (Luke 14:23). The invitation was not restricted to the already righteous: "It is not the healthy who need a physician but those who are sick" (Matt 9:12). Nor was it confined to the chosen people: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19), nor limited to the ordained Twelve. Jesus loved the rich man who lived the Commandments but could not leave everything (Mark 10:21). Paul—and finally Peter—flung open the doors indiscriminately: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female; you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

If all that is true, one has ample justification to examine holiness with less stringent requirements than conventional wisdom might call for. To be judged holy—or at least trying to achieve some semblance of it—one need not be flawless, destitute or virginal. True, to declare publicly that someone is a saint, the church must scrutinize that life meticulously. But one need not be a World Series Most Valued Player.

St. Irenaeus said in *Against Heresies*, "The glory of God is humanity, fully alive" (Lib. 4, 20, 5-7; S.C. 644-48). It is permissible to suggest then that "supernatural" life is not "*supra*natural," not beyond the limits of human nature, but rather humanity itself superbly fulfilled. What separates humans from other animals is the potential to learn and to love. Other animals know facts; a stag pursued by hunters knows that danger is behind him, but so far as we know he does not ask why: "What did I do to those guys?" We have at least the capacity (if we use it) to understand. Other animals can give their lives for their young. But we can give our lives (often without dying) for people we do not even like at the moment. Ask any parent or teacher. Can we entertain the possibility that our God-given purpose is to prepare a fully realized recipient for the gift of holiness? Nor is that role limited to purging defects, as so many were taught, but more importantly to amplify those potentials of knowing and loving. "Let your light shine before people in such a way they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16).

> Jesus loves imperfect people. On that score, all of us qualify.

Just Try

As the book of Job shows clearly, the architect of the universe has no need to check his plans with anyone beforehand, not even any official religious body. If God is content that an individual is trying his or her best (for the moment) to fulfill God's hopes in raising humans above animals, that person qualifies as a saint, even if the Vatican has not gotten around to ratifying God's judgment. That person does not need the external, ritual bestowal of baptism or any other symbolic sign of acceptance (cf. Simone Weil, Albert Camus, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.). A moment's reflection should make God's unchallengeable assessment obvious, since no intelligent creature would accept a God less kind than he or she is.

We all know unchurched people who are the salt of the earth, as Jesus hoped his disciples would be (Matt 5:13). You can call them when you are stalled on the freeway at 2 a.m. They will tell you when you are too pushy or flirtatious or tipsy, and not hesitate because you might stop liking them. It is difficult to imagine them excluded from a kingdom that welcomes Magdalene and the good thief.

Nevertheless, it is easier for ordinarily self-doubting people if some outside authority validates their inner sense that they are trying their best. Baptism and confirmation are incalculably precious assurances of inclusion in a second family that will welcome us back, no matter what. Reconciliation gives a concrete pledge that we can never make ourselves so unworthy that we negate what Jesus did for us.

Inadequacies No Barrier

If God so generously offers the merits of Christ to make up for our inadequacies and indiscriminately invites us to holiness, God does not expect anything close to undiluted purity of motive or action when asking us to lead holy lives. This is borne out on page after page in Scripture, despite our penchant for sanitizing saints regardless of what they did. Abraham, our "father in faith," pandered his wife into another man's harem. Jacob scammed his brother's birthright. Even the unassailable Moses stammered for some time trying to weasel out of God's call. David, the ancestor of the Messiah, was a conniving adulterer and murderer. Unthinking piety turns the apostles into bowdlerized saints instead of a passel of Keystone Kops, often bumping into one another in pursuit of personal advancement.

Reflect on the down-to-earth holy people you know—usually not the fastidiously devout, the cautious observers of the tiniest rules, the judgmental: Pope John XXIII, Dag Hammarskjold, Dorothy Day, Anne Frank; millions of men and women who refused to surrender their souls in Nazi camps; those who bear with dignity the slow impoverishment of disease; kids crippled in wars they did not comprehend; the nun who held your forehead when you threw up; the patient teacher who taught you to write; the parents who forgave before we "deserved" it. There is an almost palpable serenity about such people. They seem unafraid and open, indiscriminately caring, inwardly coherent and focused. Their holiness is their wholeness, their altogetherness.

The source of that equanimity seems to be a special relationship with the ultimate being and, reciprocally, a freedom from the self-concerned values of this world. That genuine connection with a transcendent energy source makes them divinely restless, unwilling to ignore or yield to elements of human behavior that conflict with the obvious intentions of a provident God: exploitation, courageous ignorance, neglect of the marginalized and corruption anywhere.

Conversion Needed

Accepting holiness requires, at the very least, conversion in the sense of transformation, coming to a halt to ask, "Is this the truth? Is this where I want to go?" fiercely refusing to be

bamboozled any longer by the mesmerizing media that promise instant gratification, but deliver ashes; rejecting the investment of your heart and hopes in anything that cannot defy death; uprooting one's soul—one's self—from the trivial and transitory and engrafting it into the eternal. It is not a static achievement but a continued evolution of soul that in authentic holiness becomes contagious. St. Paul suggests ordinary holiness should be easily evident: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22).

If we trim inflated notions of heroic holiness that lead us to negate God's prodigal invitation, we might fulfill the hope that motivated the incarnation, death and resurrection of the Son of God: "That you may have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10); "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). Jesus could not have used "perfect" in the ordinary sense: flawless, unblemished, absolute. That would have been blasphemous. Only God can be perfect in such a restrictive sense. Both Hebrew and Old English use "perfect" for the way a sphere, no matter how large or small, is complete.

Holiness as Well-Roundedness

"Holy" is really a synonym for successful, fulfilled, well-rounded. Each of those words describes what God intended fully evolved human beings to be. We are the only species that is incomplete, whose nature is not an inevitable blueprint but an invitation. Every rock, rutabaga and rabbit fulfills God's intentions without insubordination. They have no choice but to glorify God with an obedience that is, more exactly, helpless conformity. Only we, of all creatures, can choose not to live up to the inner programming that invites us by a quantum leap above even the most intelligent animals. As far as we know, no shark or tiger is annoyed by qualms of conscience. They are incapable of being wrong.

Those who rise to the challenges of understanding more and loving more at least seem more alive, more fulfilled as specifically human than those who succumb to the allurements of the beast in us (pride, covetousness, etc.). Few would argue that Saddam Hussein had a more accurate concept of the human than St. Thomas More.

Also, unlike other species, the requirements embedded in our nature are not immediately operative through inbred instincts. Each of us must discover the directions in which we will find fulfillment. This is—or ought to be—the goal of a lifelong education: not merely to make a living but to find out what living is for. With that understanding, it becomes more obvious that holiness, the full evolution of humanity, is not inaccessible to ordinary people, but it is also not commonplace. It takes a lot of effort. "Holy" need not be confined to achievement. Just striving is enough. A

A Partner for the Pastor

Tips for finding the right person

BY THOMAS P. SWEETSER

TO BE PASTOR for a typical Catholic parish these days is to attempt the impossible, for the pastor's role has grown too large. It includes pastoral duties (preaching, counseling, presiding at liturgies, administrating sacraments, visiting parishioners), managing human resources (staff direction, performance reviews, coordinating meetings, public relations) and administration (finances, buildings, decision making, long-range planning), to name but a few. Add the prospect of taking responsibility for an additional parish (one or more, which has become increasingly frequent), and the pastor's role is fraught with frustration. A pastor who wants to be present to the people may instead find himself rushing from one commitment to another, falling behind in answering e-mail messages and returning phone calls, arriving at presentations unprepared and lacking adequate time and energy to manage conflicts or handle crises. It is not a recipe that leads to success or to a sense of accomplishment. Managing the staff, overseeing finances, directing lay leadership—these are too much for one individual to do, especially when added to the pastoral work required of and central to the pastor's role.

One solution is to find a partner, a coworker to share the administrative burden. As the primary decision maker in a parish, the pastor, according to canon law, has the authority to hire an administrator to share his duties. At the Parish Evaluation Project in Milwaukee, we have worked with nearly 20 pastors who have found partnering with an administrator to be an effective new solution to the problems of an expanded workload. Interested parishes may want to keep several considerations in mind as they plan for such a new position.

1. *Partnership.* Hiring an administrator cannot solve all the issues associated with a modern parish, but it can provide someone with whom the pastor can share his workload and negotiate some of the pitfalls and land mines of parish life. For example, such a person can give the pastor honest feedback, hold him accountable to his own goals and promises, and help him maintain healthy boundaries between work and his personal life in a way that no one else can. Even those pastors who have a gift for administration and who thrive on keeping everything running smoothly know that they cannot do it all alone. Having someone else to share the load and act as a confidant and wisdom figure brings out the best in any pastor, no matter how competent and gifted.

2. *New Position.* Look outside the staff for the administrator. Only rarely is there someone already on staff who can fill the new role of being a partner with the pastor. The position would not work well if filled by a business manager or deacon or associate pastor who had been on staff and had already established a staff identity and way of relating to the pastor. Rather, consider the parish administrator an entirely new position, not a reworking of current jobs and tasks.

3. *Trial Period.* At least for an interim period, while working out the bugs of the role, consider hiring a part-time administrator from among qualified parishioners—perhaps a retired person skilled in administration, human resources and management. Then, when you are ready to fill the administrator's job, do not jump at the first candidate to come along. Be highly selective. Negotiate a six-month pilot period to try out the new way of proceeding with your best candidate. Monitor how it is working for the pastor, staff, core

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

Left to right, Jordan Bradshaw, O.P., Pastor, Jackie Hooke, parish administrator, and Francesco Vicente, O.P., at Holy Rosary Parish, Antioch, Calif.

THOMAS P. SWEETSER, S.J., is director of the Parish Evaluation Project, Milwaukee, Wis.

leaders and parishioners, as well as for the administrator. At the end of the pilot period, conduct a thorough review and assessment before inviting the individual to sign on for a longer commitment. It has to be the right person, one who can free up the pastor's role, not make it worse by adding strain and tension to the pastor's shoulders.

4. *Not a Business.* Make sure that the candidate has knowledge and extensive experience working in a pastoral setting. Although the job demands an awareness of business organization and management models, a parish is not the same as a business. It is a spiritual operation that is Gospel-driven. Some decisions that would make sense from a business point of view would not work in a parish. The administrator, in other words, must have a pastoral perspective, an awareness of the spiritual dimension of the parish, a passion for ministry and growth in the Spirit, as well as the human resources background.

5. *Staff Oversight.* Besides being a partner with the pastor, one key aspect of the administrator's role is to be a coach, mentor, resource, advocate, facilitator, assessor and model for the staff. The administrator helps to clarify each staff member's job description, then uses it as an evaluation tool when assessing how well the staff members actually did what they said they would do throughout the year. The administrator makes sure that the staff meets together regularly and that meetings are quality periods with good bonding, shared decision making, spiritual enrichment and effective planning. The pastor and administrator share the role of hiring and letting staff members go, always paying attention to the proper procedures of good management and business practices.

6. *Leadership.* Besides forming a partnership with the pastor and overseeing the operation of the staff, the administrator's third task is to work with the pastoral council and other leadership bodies so that they can accomplish much in a reasonable length of time. The parish leaders can find their valuable time put to the best use and see results coming from their work as leadership bodies.

7. *Stewardship.* One other task an administrator might oversee is to challenge parishioners to practice stewardship as a way of life. Stewardship includes

a personal commitment to daily prayer, involvement in at least one ministry or project (in the parish or elsewhere) and giving back to God a portion of one's financial blessings in the form of a monetary contribution to the parish. Although established groups and committees might direct and maintain various aspects of the parish stewardship, the administrator would make sure that all of these areas are being addressed, ensuring the effective coordination of volunteers and encouraging people to give their fair share in support of parish ministries and programs.

IN ALL THE FACILITATION WE DO as pastoral consultants with parishes across the country, our most helpful contribution is perhaps in helping pastors to see the importance of finding someone else to work with them in such a partnership. The pastor must find the right person to share the pastoring role and work with him or her to provide a spiritually enriching and well-managed environment for all who are employed in the parish community, or are members of it, or are helped by it.

We have heard from many satisfied pastors who have hired a pastoral administrator as a partner in the leadership of the parish. While what follows is not an exact quote, it does characterize a typical response.

"Yes, we operate as equals; Virginia handles the finances, facilities, our new building project and the oversight of the staff. I do the Masses, sacramental ministry, pastoral duties and nurture the spiritual side of staff and ministers. We both are part of the pastoral council, but she takes care of making up the agenda with the chairperson. I don't have to worry about any of those things.

"She is worth any amount of money we pay her, which is very reasonable considering all she does, especially in managing the staff. They are so much happier since she came on board. Staff members take turns running our meetings, but she makes sure they start and end on time and that what happens at our gathering is quality time together. Virginia also sits down with each staff person to work out the job description and then holds the person accountable to this throughout the year. I was never able to do that before Virginia arrived. Not only is the staff held accountable—and this is a positive thing because they know just where they make a difference in the parish—but so are other groups in the parish, including the pastoral council, finance council, school committee, you name it.

"She really has this place humming. That one addition to the staff has meant all the difference. But be careful who you hire. It has to be the right chemistry between the two of you. When I hired Virginia, she suggested that we try it out for a few months to see if this was what both of us had in mind. At the end of the trial period, because it was looking pretty good, we decided to extend it for another six months after asking the staff and parish leaders to give us feedback about how it was working for them. This had to work for everyone, not just the two of us. Now it has become an institution in the parish. There are no more end-runs, where people come to me because they don't like what Virginia told them. They soon realized that I would just sent them back to her for a final answer. I don't know why I didn't do this a lot sooner. It makes such good sense." A

Our Mother's Funeral

BY DENNIS M. LINEHAN

ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

On the morning of Monday Aug. 4, 1998, I awoke in the Jesuit residence of Cheverus High School in Portland, Me., with an energy that I have rarely felt. I knew that our mother was terminally ill, but she had insisted that I go to the dedication of the new facility for the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped, which is directed by Rick Curry, S.J., in Belfast, Me. So there I was, in Maine, at the most traveled weekend of the summer as she was dying in Philadelphia. I called home about 7 a.m., and my brother told me that Mom had died peacefully during the night.

Against all expectations, I was able to get a flight from Portland to New York, come back to America House, and then go to Philadelphia, where my family met me at the 30th Street station. We went to the funeral director to make the arrangements. The number of times that my brother, sister or sister-in-law has had to collect me from the 30th Street station in family emergencies is beyond counting. And the funeral director was a family friend, a pillar of the parish and, with us, a most empathetic mourner.

Our mother was a strong-minded Irish-American lady, who had laid down the law about her funeral. No open casket: "I don't want people looking at me when I'm dead." As to the venue of the funeral, she expressed only negatives, so it was left to us, and the only realistic choice was "the Alley."

"The Alley" is Old Saint Joseph's Jesuit Church at Willing's Alley in Philadelphia. She had been taken there by her own grandmother during World War I to pray for her uncles who were in the service. I officiated at my brother's wedding there. Two of my closest Jesuit friends and classmates celebrated their first Masses there after ordination, and one pronounced final vows there. Mother was, of course, in attendance at all of those celebrations.

Mother did not enjoy good health at any time in her life, and her last years were punctuated with crises. After an especially acute episode, when she was again able to get around, we went to Mass at "the Alley."

"How do they get a coffin in here?" We assured her that it was easy enough and showed her the process. We were a little taken aback at how reassured she was at the demonstration.

Well, of course, the time came. Our Jesuit pastor, Father William Rickle, and the administrator of the Jesuit residence, Father David Barry, both close and caring friends, were up to the event. I said later to our Father James Martin of America House, who was deacon of the funeral Mass, "This is never easy, but it is a lot easier when you have your own church."

We broke some rules. Two readings were delivered by two Jewish doctors, Elizabeth and Bradley Sevin, close family friends, who had been with mother during her last day. Who better than two believing, practicing Jews to read from the Book of Ruth and the Psalms? The New Testament reading was given by our cousin, Anne, in her wonderful, educated,

DENNIS M. LINEHAN, S.J., is an associate editor of **America**.

Kerry Irish accent.

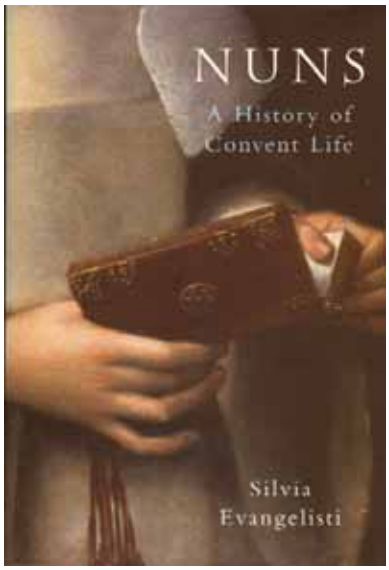
My Jesuit brothers were there in force, in the same numbers as had truly astonished our family when our father died. And they were the usual suspects. All the editors of **America**, my teaching colleagues and former students, and my own teachers and mentors, to the number of 50. It was quite a sight in the sanctuary, both times, and never forgotten. I said that "if a bomb had gone off in the church, it would have set back Catholic publishing a hundred years."

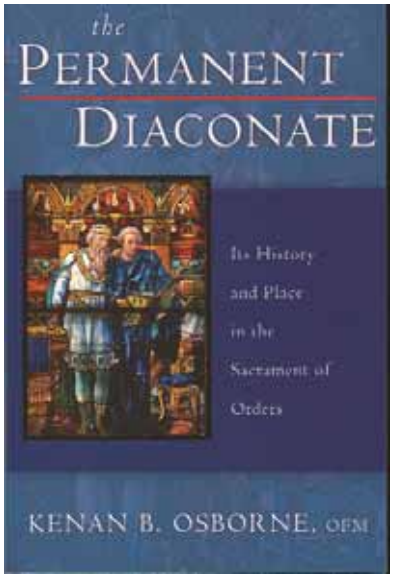
One man was late, so I nailed him. I identified him at the post-Communion as "the best teacher I ever had," and exposed him as someone on whom mother had a major crush. She and dad used to kid about it. Father James Henry Donohue never failed to captivate people—with words, with his personality, with his pervasive holiness. After the funeral he said, modestly, to Father Francis Burch, "I always had a way with the older woman." And "older" she had been. I had admitted in the funeral homily that, as bereft as we were, we could not fail to admit that "mother was not exactly snatched from us untimely in the full flower of youth at age 87."

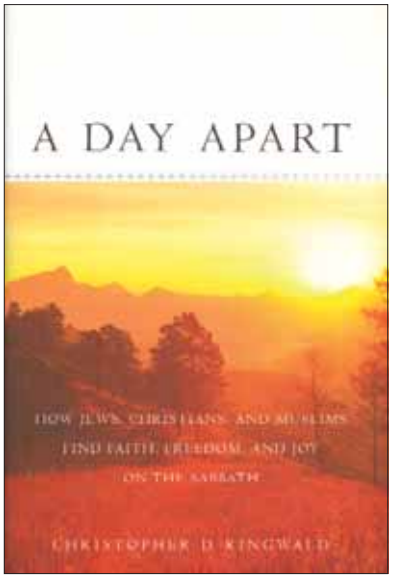
The funeral cortege to Holy Sepulcher Cemetery moved in bright sunlight along Philadelphia's magnificent East River Drive, past the church where we had all been baptized—along the same route taken by her parents, her sister, her husband and her brother.

At the grave site, our little cousins stayed in the car. "Was that box her or her stuff?" With motherly wisdom our Anne answered: "That was her body. She is already in heaven." And Father James Torrens, our most poetic editor, found a leaf, which he has kept. He could not have known then that it was something mother often did.

Nine years have passed. Then little boys, Michael and Liam are growing, and Michael is enjoying the summer at Fordham Prep in the Bronx. Regina, Michael and Miriam and I still miss our mother, but with no regrets and an awareness of the flow of life. We know that not everyone has had the same good experiences, and we pray for those who have not, but most of all we are thankful for what God has given us, in our memories of a life, and of a funeral. A







Behind (and Beyond) the Walls

Nuns

A History of Convent Life

By Silvia Evangelisti

Oxford Univ. Press. 304p $34.95
ISBN 9780192804358

Early Christian literature, both Greek and Latin, tells us that there is a long history of Christian women living in celibate communities of prayer and service. By the end of the fourth century, at least, such communities were not unusual; and through the Middle Ages in the West, women's monastic establishments developed in tandem with those of men, sharing founders, rules and sometimes even churches and monastic buildings. But it is in the world the distinguished Jesuit scholar John O'Malley calls "Early Modern Catholicism" that the figure of the nun took on the form we know best: great communities of cloistered women wearing the habit of their orders, following traditions only partially glimpsed by those in the world. These are the nuns Silvia Evangelisti presents in this lively and wide-ranging book.

A lecturer in early modern history at the University of East Anglia, Evangelisti covers the period 1450 to 1700, the centuries in which women's monastic communities played the largest role in European social history, even as they are the centuries in which *clausura*, the strict enclosure of nuns behind monastery walls, was most stringently enforced. As Evangelisti explains, the concept of enclosure was preached by ecclesiastical figures, notably the monastic reformer Caesarius of Arles, in the early Middle Ages. But it is in the period leading up to the Council of Trent in the 16th century that enclosure became increasingly important, and it was with the last session of Trent in 1563 that enclosure was formally legislated for all nuns. Actually, the flowering in the later Middle Ages of semi-religious women's communities, like Beguines and tertiaries, had led to something of a crisis about women's religious life in the century before this study begins. In the second chapter, "Cloistered Spaces," the author tells us enclosure was connected to a domestic economy in which families attempted to save their patrimony by sending at least one daughter in each generation to be a nun. These girls often had no particular religious vocation, and sometimes chafed at the religious bit. In the 17th century, a Venetian nun named Arcangela Tarabotti wrote *L'Inferno Monacale (Monastic Hell)*, which criticized this system for having more to do with politics and worldly goods than spiritual goals.

And yet, behind the cloister walls, early modern nuns created marvelous worlds of literature, theater, music and the visual arts. It seems that being locked up led directly to an explosion of creativity. Evangelisti describes the contributions of early modern nuns to each of these artistic forms, admirably synthesizing recent scholarship that has brought nuns' theater and music, religious and secular, out of manuscript libraries and onto modern stages. This is the heart of *Nuns*, a warm description of some remarkable artistic accomplishments of early modern Catholicism: the spiritual works of Caterina Vigri in Bologna and Teresa of Avila in Spain; the plays of Juana Inés de la Cruz in Mexico and Beatrice del Sera in Tuscany; the music of Lucrezia Orsina Vizana in Bologna and Chiara Margarita Cozzolani in Milan. One of the most interesting questions about these recently rediscovered works concerns their intended audience. Written and performed in the monastery, by nuns, perhaps originally as educational exercises, they nevertheless came to have some paradoxical worldly fame. Many of these works circulated in manuscript and even printed editions, and visitors to Milan in the 17th century often made a stop at the Monastery of Santa Radegonda to hear the nuns sing from behind the grate.

The Reviewers

E. Ann Matter is associate dean of arts and letters at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia.

Mary Alice Piil, C.S.J., is director of faith formation for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y.

Rev. James L. Fredericks is a professor of theology at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Calif.

The realm of visual arts is equally intriguing. We know that in spite of rules of poverty, nuns owned many lovely private art objects—statues, illustrated books, crucifixes—and that women's houses could be sumptuously decorated by the most famous artists. Although the objects behind cloister walls, such as the altar painting by Raphael in the Monastery of Montluce, Perugia, and the panels by Hans Burckmair and Hans Holbein in Saint Katherine's, Augsburg, were visible only to the community, sometimes artistic programs included a complementary set of decorations in the outside church, such as the frescos of Bernardino Luini in both the cloister and the public sides of the monastery church of San Maurizio in Milan. And nuns were also artists, usually for the devotional life of the community, but sometimes they were famous artists like the Florentine Dominican Plautilla Nelli, painting religious and secular themes, for both their world and the wider one. Evangelisti gives special attention to the genre of nuns' portraits, a tradition of remembrance that places the important abbesses and women leaders in the same category as the great men of their time. The 21 illustrations in the book include intriguing examples of artwork done by and for nuns.

In the last two chapters, Evangelisti turns, for contrast, to the strict enclosure of the Tridentine world—nuns who roamed the colonies as missionaries, teaching and catechizing to spread Christianity. These new orders, like the Ursulines and the Visitandines, and congregations of sisters who were not formally nuns, like the Daughters of Charity, founded by St. Vincent de Paul, had to combine venerable traditions of seclusion with a new vision of women's religious life.

Evangelisti ends her tale at this point with a brief look ahead to the more recent centuries, in which women's religious life suffered a steep decline in both numbers and cultural position. These elements are related, of course, but it would be most interesting to have a sequel to *Nuns*, bringing the history of convent life into the 21st century. While this book is a celebration of a world of women's monastic life, perhaps "Nuns II" could help us understand better what role intentional communities might play for Catholic women of the future. ***E. Ann Matter***

An Order of Its Own

The Permanent Diaconate

Its History and Place in the Sacrament of Orders

By Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M.
Paulist Press. 214p $18.95
ISBN 0809144484

The permanent diaconate, a reality in the ecclesial structure of the church in the United States since its renewal by the Second Vatican Council, has been the topic of several volumes in the Paulist Press Deacon's Library series. Kenan Osborne, O.F.M., emeritus professor of systematic theology at the Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, is a distinguished author whose past works include *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World* (1999).

There is no question that the evolving ministry of the permanent deacon in the United States continues to be in search of

"There simply isn't the budget for us to make 200 times what our average workers make—unless, of course, we cut their pay.

CARTOON BY PAT BYRNES

a theology. Nor is there any question that the deacons themselves find it difficult to articulate a clear personal identity. As Osborne points out, while the Second Vatican Council paved the way for the emergence of the diaconate after a hiatus of some 1,200 years, the actual implementation of the order has been left to the local bishop. Clearly this presents a problem for the development of the diaconate in the future.

Part I of this book, "Ministry and Leadership in the Latin Church Today: Contextual Considerations," contains several chapters that lay a solid groundwork for discussing the identity of the deacon within the hierarchical structure of the church. Osborne sets the stage by calling for a clear articulation of the context in which one must view the diaconate. A "wide-ranging view of today's institutional church and ministry," he writes, provides this context. The author suggests that the ministry of all baptized-confirmed Christians, the papacy, episcopacy, priesthood, diaconate and lay men and women must be factored in to develop the context. This section of the book offers a well-crafted synthesis of each of the ministries as it unfolds, beginning with the Second Vatican Council. The chapters offer a solid foundation for continued discussion of the diaconate.

Significant to the discussion is the author's ongoing exposition of the threefold ministry (priest, prophet, king) as found in each of the texts of the Vatican Council that relate to specific orders within the church. The redefinition of the episcopacy and of priesthood are presented clearly and at length as they have evolved since Vatican II. So, too, are the challenges that such redefinitions pose. Rather than see each order as separate from the other, Osborne stresses the need for a perspective of interrelationship that recognizes the role of each as carrying out the mission of Christ in some unique fashion.

In the chapter on the renewal of the permanent diaconate, Osborne identifies three areas that pose problems regarding the place of the deacon within the ecclesial structure. The first issue is at the theological level—namely, the relationship of bishop-priest-deacon. The second, at the pastoral level, is boundary issues, while the third, at the personal level, is the issue of

self-identity. Throughout this chapter, Osborne focuses on the most significant issues related to the order of deacon today.

The following chapter, unfortunately, is devoted to a study of the emerging role of lay men and women in ministry today. While no doubt a challenge to the development of a unique ministry of deacon (the topic has already been discussed in a prior book in the Paulist Deacon Library), it diverts the reader from the primary focus of this book.

Part II, "Diaconal Ministry in a Post-Vatican II Church," takes up various topics related, at some level, to those raised in the first part of the book—questions, for instance, related to deacon formation. The author appears to be under the impression that all deacons are being formed without a solid theological foundation. While this may be true of many, it is not universally so. Some dioceses provide graduate programs for those in formation.

Quite interesting are the chapters on deaconesses and on the anointing of the sick. Missing from the conversation is any development of the fact that the majority of permanent deacons are married men. This certainly has an impact on their self-identity as deacons and on the people's understanding of clerical ministry.

Seen within the corpus of The Paulist Press Deacon's Library, Osborne's volume certainly has a place. Standing alone, however, as a single volume on the diaconate, it does not sufficiently cover the history of the order nor the questions related to its future development.

Mary Alice Piil

The Original Feast Day

A Day Apart

How Jews, Christians, and Muslims Find Faith, Freedom, and Joy on the Sabbath

By Christopher D. Ringwald

Oxford Univ. Press. 336p $27

ISBN 0195165365

In the Los Angeles area, a community of observant Jews wants to bring picnic bas-

Poem

Job

You live in unremitting darkness,
surrounded by an unbearable silence
with which your friends cannot cope.
They fill the air with worthless words,
ugly flies buzzing around your sores.

Your howl of pain, moans in the night,
attempt to shatter the stillness
of divine and distant implacability.
Your cries are sacred songs,
humanity's common lament.

With no more reasonableness
than the cause of your agony,
the eyelids of the morning blink,
give a transitory glimmer
of the wildness behind all suffering.

You glimpse One whose ways are not ours,
Who, blasted by our why's, changes the subject.
For all this unearned, unredeemable pain,
your recompense is only the Is-ness of God,
barely enough, but light to wrestle on.

Bonnie Thurston

BONNIE THURSTON, now retired after 30 years of university teaching, is the author of 11 theological books and two small collections of poetry. This poem is one of three runners-up in the 2007 Foley Poetry Contest.

kets to the beach on Saturdays. Surprisingly, this has put them at odds with both the Sierra Club and the staff of the California Coastal Commission. According to Talmud, a Jew may not *schlep* anything outside his home on the Sabbath. A wall, like the wall that encircled Jerusalem, however, creates a private enclosure, or *eruv*, within which schlepping is not a problem. With this in mind, the Pacific Jewish Center has proposed to string several miles of fishing tackle from Santa Monica to Venice Beach as part of an *eruv* that includes much of the West Side. The Sierra Club and the staff of the CCC are opposed to the project, fearing for the safety of birds that nest in the area. The commission itself has yet to rule. Who knew that keeping the Third Commandment would get so complicated?

Christopher Ringwald, who directs the Faith and Society Project at the Sage Colleges, Albany, N.Y., has written a very unusual book about the Sabbath practices of Jews and Muslims and how these traditions might enrich the spiritual lives of Christians like himself. The Sabbath, according to Ringwald, "is the dessert most people leave on the table." Not wanting to miss out on the gelato, Ringwald examines the Sabbath-keeping of three families: a Jewish family, the Kligermans; a Muslim family, the Haqqies; and his own Roman Catholic family.

Ringwald is guided in this endeavor by what he himself calls the "participant-observer" method. He might very well have called it an example of "comparative spirituality," by which I mean that he seeks to learn as much as he can about the Sabbaths of his Jewish and Muslim neighbors as a first step in reflecting on the meaning of his own Sabbath practice. Reflecting on the meaning of Sunday, for example, in light of a Saturday spent with the Kligermans, enables him to observe, "I saw the gift of my own religion that had been there all along."

Ringwald gives structure to *A Day Apart* by means of a chronological account of the history of Sabbath-keeping, starting with the giving of the Commandments and continuing with Jewish, then Christian and finally Muslim developments. Adorning this structure, however, are anecdotes about

Sabbaths with the Kligermans, the Haqqies and the Ringwalds as well as his own musings and meditations. This book is an example of a spirituality deeply grounded in and aware of the religious needs of the laity. Jews and Muslims do not have monastic forms of spiritual practice. Instead, they have their Sabbaths. For Ringwald, this fact signals an opportunity to reflect on a lay-oriented Christian spirituality centered on the weekly rhythms of family life. Sometimes Ringwald serves up banalities. More often, however, he offers the reader gems like the following: "I now see the unfolding opposites of the day. We do less and are more, we stop earning and grabbing and have more, we cease from making and make more, we let creation be and in our repose we see it to be more than ever we knew."

Ringwald's fascination with Jewish Sabbath regulations is revealing. His Jewish friends walk to temple through the rain without benefit of an umbrella because to open one would constitute pitching a tent, an activity expressly forbidden on the Sabbath. Some Jews take a dim view of baseball on the Sabbath as well. In playing the game, at least one rabbi has argued, the ground is compacted in a way that could be construed as an agricultural activity. Ringwald's generally nonjudgmental account of all this seems strained, given the lesser importance Paul assigns the Mosaic Law. Do we have to find everything about the religious practices of others admirable? I take Ringwald's refusal to come to Pauline conclusions about Jewish Sabbath preoccupations not so much a reflection of political correctness as Catholic nostalgia for preconciliar devotions, in which spirituality was something that the laity could do on their own—at home and separate from the liturgies of the clergy.

To be fair, Ringwald also recounts the famous story of Hillel. When still a boy, Hillel spent a Sabbath night perched on a roof listening in as rabbis debated the Torah. He was found the next morning half-frozen. According to the story, the rabbis built a fire, clearly contrary to Sabbath regulations, in order to save the boy's life.

James L. Fredericks

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Send résumé to: Kathy Barile, Business Manager, Gesu Church, 2470 Miramar Blvd.,

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Letters

Through the Fog

My thanks and congratulations to Bishop Donald W. Trautman for his excellent article on the new Mass translations being moved forward by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (5/21). I must admit that reading it saddened me, because it is yet another indication of the ongoing determination of some forces within the Vatican to push back the influence of the Second Vatican Council. An example of this is that over the last 15 to 20 years there have been numerous moves to restrict the activities of national bishops' conferences and other ecclesial entities that had offered some hope of increased collegiality in the life of the church.

Bishop Trautman rightly says that the council's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" pointed out that with respect to texts and rites, the people "should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully and actively." Earlier in the article, he pointed out how the Congregation for Divine Worship's document *Liturgiam Authenticam* is not guided by this important principle but rather is inordinately literal in its translations.

In producing the document, the congregation issued an instruction on liturgical change sadly lacking in collegial or collaborative efforts. According to Bishop Trautman, the cardinal and bishop members of the congregation were not consulted, the Pontifical Biblical Commission was not consulted, and the episcopal conferences were not consulted.

In my opinion, this method of operation is tragic. This is not leadership! This method of operation points to a lack of the vision and pastoral sense that should mark the approach of this important congregation. Does not such action give the impression that those making decisions seem to think that they have regained control of "their" church?

Onward through the fog.

(Most Rev.) John McCarthy
Austin, Tex.

Clarification

I personally give religious assent to the church's teaching regarding the intrinsically evil acts as proposed in Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. I

The Word

The Rich Fool

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), Aug. 5, 2007

Readings: Eccl 1:2 and 2:21-23; Ps 90:3-6, 12-14, 17; Col 3:1-5, 9-11; Luke 12:13-21

"You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you" (Luke 12:20)

IT IS NO SECRET that we Americans live in a materialistic culture. For some people the pursuit of wealth and possessions seems to function as a kind of religion substitute. The Old Testament wisdom books and the New Testament writings have some wise things to say about money and possessions. While affirming that we live in the real world of commerce, they teach us that we should not make material possessions into a god, that life is fragile and ultimately in God's hands and that we need to sort out what is really important and lasting before it is too late.

One of the recurrent figures in the biblical wisdom tradition is the rich fool, that is, the person who works hard to amass great wealth only to leave it at his death to heirs who will fritter it away. The author of the book known as Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth (Greek and Hebrew words for "preacher" and "gatherer") is the grumpy old man of the Bible. In statements that are typical of his outlook he describes life as "toil" and "vanity," and in today's selection he brings up the example of someone who has used all his ingenuity and energy to build a fortune only to have to pass on his property to someone who has not labored at all.

This theme is developed in today's reading from Luke 12, which contains the parable of the rich fool. The occasion is a request that Jesus serve as an arbiter between two brothers in dividing their inheritance. The eldest son usually received the largest share. Instead of accommodating this request, Jesus uses the opportunity to warn them against greed and to teach that "though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

To illustrate this point, Jesus presents the parable of the rich fool, containing a monologue by the rich man and the divine judgment upon him. The rich man had a very good harvest. Instead of enjoying the fruits of his harvest, however, the rich man put all his thoughts and energy into plans for building even larger barns to hold the abundance. He imagines that when the building projects have been completed, he will rest and enjoy himself. His words to himself ("rest, eat, drink, be merry") echo terms found on many tombstones in antiquity. But the new barns are never built, because the man dies suddenly. Instead, the fruits of his labors are passed on to someone else, and he finds no enjoyment in them. In the divine judgment he is addressed, "You fool."

As both the reading from Ecclesiastes and the Lukan parable of the rich fool emphasize, there are few sadder sights than someone who puts all his talents and energies in making a lot of money only to leave it all to a lazy and wasteful heir. These texts remind us that we never know when death may come to us, that we cannot place our ultimate trust in money and material possessions because they too are fragile, and that in our life we must not let material possessions become more important than fulfilling our commitments to God, ourselves and other persons. Otherwise we too may merit the name, "You fool."

Praying With Scripture

- Can you think of prominent rich persons who have suffered the fate of the rich fool?
- What lessons does the parable of the rich fool teach you?
- What role do money and possessions play in your life? How do you strike a balance?

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., is professor of New Testament at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass.

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personally give religious assent to the church's teaching regarding homosexuality contained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I personally give religious assent to the position of the magisterium concerning the legal recognition of unions between homosexual persons as expressed in the *Considerations* published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I personally give religious acceptance to the discipline proposed by the Congregation for Catholic Education in its *Instruction Concerning the Admission to Seminaries and Holy Orders of Candidates With Homosexual Tendencies.*

Edward Vacek, S.J.
Cambridge, Mass.

All Grand

I noticed an error in the review of *Thérèse of Lisieux: God's Gentle Warrior*, by Janice Farnham, R.J.M. (6/18). In speaking of "Into Great Silence," she refers to the "long hours of solitary contemplation at La Grande Trappe." Well, let's hope that's true, too (though I think it's La Trappe, et pas La Grande). What Sister Janice means is La Grande Chartreuse, of course. Most likely, you've heard from others about this.

Thank you, and God's blessings on all at **America**.

M. Zita Wenker, O.S.B.
Branford, Conn.

More Austere

What were those Carthusians doing at La Grand Trappe (Book Review: "Great Saint of the Little Way," 6/18)? They should have been in the Grand

Faith and Hope

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), Aug. 12, 2007

Readings: Wis 18:6-9; Ps 33:1, 12, 18-22; Heb 11:1-2, 8-19; Luke 12:32-48 (or 12:35-40)

"Faith is the realization of what is hoped for" (Heb 11:1)

FAITH AND HOPE are two of the theological virtues. They are called theological because they have their origin and goal in God. While theologians make precise distinctions between them, in the Bible they tend to blend together, because they take shape in specific human persons like Abraham. Both faith and hope point us toward the fullness of life in God's kingdom.

Today's reading from Hebrews contains the only explicit definition of faith in the Bible: "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen." Note that faith is defined in terms of hope. Hebrews is more of a written sermon than a letter, and its author was a skilled preacher. To illustrate his definition of faith, he offers many examples from the Old Testament and introduces the exploits of his heroes with the phrase "by faith."

By faith Abraham left his homeland, accepted God's promise that his descendants would form a great nation and was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. At the same time, Abraham always desired a better, heavenly home and hoped for a place in God's eternal kingdom. From the examples in Hebrews 11, the following characteristics of faith emerge: knowledge of unseen realities, generous response to God's call, faithful endurance in the face of suffering and death and hopeful trust in God's promises. Faith and hope blend together against the horizon of God's kingdom.

The short selection from Wisdom 18 is part of an elaborate reflection on ancient Israel's exodus from Egypt. What gave hope to the ancient Israelites was their faith in God's promises. And their faith and hope were vindicated in their salvation.

Today's reading from Luke 12 is one of three eschatological discourses in the Gospel. It reminds us that God wants to give us the kingdom of God (the horizon and goal of hope) and offers advice on faithful conduct in the present. The passage is a collection of short parables, in which the chief characters are a master and his servants. In the Lukan context the master is the risen Jesus, who will come again as the glorious Son of Man, and the servants are his followers.

According to these master-servant parables, the future coming of the Son of Man is certain, but its precise time is not known. Therefore the proper attitude for the servants is constant watchfulness. They should not use the master's apparent delay as an excuse for improper behavior. The hope of the faithful servants is that they will enjoy the fullness of God's kingdom.

ART BY TAD DUNNE

Wednesday (Aug. 15) is the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to this church doctrine, Mary was taken up to be with her son, Jesus, at the moment of her death. Her faith and hope were rewarded immediately. The Scripture readings emphasize her place in salvation history as the mother of the Messiah, her assumption as the preview of our resurrection and her good example of faith and hope in God's promises. ***Daniel J. Harrington***

Praying With Scripture

- What do you understand by faith and hope? How do they work together in your life?
- Do you ever think of yourself as a servant of God? What does it mean for you?
- How might this Sunday's readings help you to understand better the Assumption of Mary?

Chartreuse! In the old days a sign of a fervent Trappist was a desire to become a Carthusian. Many a novice master spent hours trying to talk a novice out of transferring—they spend most of their time stoking their fires in the winter, our community life is harder than their solitary life etc. etc., all with the utmost charity and esteem of our Carthusian brothers, whom we knew really were more austere than we were, darn it. Transferring to another religious order was allowed only if it was a step up. A Trappist could become a Carthusian, a step up, but not a Jesuit, a step down. I'm not sure if a Jesuit could become a Dominican or not. Would that be a step up???

(Rt. Rev.) Brendan Freeman, O.C.S.O.
Peosta, Iowa

Pioneer

America, thank you for re-reminding us of that great Jewish pioneer and eminent scholar, Abraham Joshua Heschel. A rereading of his works is never time wasted. For some, the quality of insight accompanying his writing can cause heart palpitation.

Damian MacPherson, S.A.
Toronto, Ont., Canada

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