America

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Helping Parents of Abuse Victims

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Of Many Things

ATOP MY FILING CABINET lies a typescript entitled "When My Strength Is Spent." It is a theological ethics of family caregiving to the elderly. It is waiting to be sent off to Jesuit readers and then a publisher—one day when the deadlines let up, the speaking engagements give out and my ghostwriting is no longer wanted. God willing, it will be sooner. The last chapter addresses questions of final transition, both for the elder and the family. One of those transitions is trusting a loved one to the care of others: home health aides, nursing homes, hospices and, ultimately, the Everlasting Arms.

My mother, my brother Phil and sister-in-law Lois and I have been caught in that transition since June of last year. Late that month Mom fell with a broken ankle. It took two months to mend, and Mom entered rehabilitation in hope of moving to assisted living. But the opportunity was cut short. A series of short-term emergencies—heart stoppage, blood clots, pneumonia—conspired to keep her a nursing home patient. At the same time, the prognosis for return of mobility grew poor. It was clear Mom could no longer live alone.

Mom had lived independently since she was widowed in 1974. First she lived in the family home in the New Brighton neighborhood of Staten Island, where she had grown up and had many cousins, close friends and civic involvements. Later she moved to a new home my brother built for her north of Boston, where he lives. For a dozen years, she lived an active life. Embraced by the local seniors, she was warmly welcomed and even invited to run for president of The Townies, once the exclusive province of native Yankees.

One by one that circle of friends passed away. The last to die was Kathy Cena, the grandmother of W.W.E. champion John Cena. When Mom gave up driving—it helped that the lease on her car expired when the decision had to be taken—Kathy became her lifeline, driving her wherever she needed to go. They had a wonderful life, combining their visits to doctors and medical labs with breakfast, lunch and shopping trips. When Kathy died three years ago, Mom became more and more homebound. After a time, she needed the support of a walker. At first she moved about so quickly I called her "my charioteer." About three months before her hospitalization, the Visiting Nurse Service set up a program for her with a number of helpers: a nurse, a physical therapist and a home health aide.

Mom, who had looked forward eagerly to going to assisted care, has adjusted well to nursing home life. The dedicated and attentive staff make a big difference. Daily she gets exercise on her walker and does regular physical therapy and refresher training in occupational therapy. The therapists have gone out of their way to get her fitted with special shoes and an improved brace to assist her mobility. Some aides make visits from other floors to say hello.

Mom plays a lot of Boggle. It is a pastime she picked up from me. We used to play Scrabble, but Scrabble is too cumbersome for the hospital tray at her bedside, and on days when her eyesight is weaker, the Boggle tray is easier to see than magazines or books. Boggle and her reading have given her a bit of a reputation around the home as an intellectual. Some of the aides have learned to play Boggle with her, and on my last visit, I met a volunteer visitor who had picked up a set after watching Mom play. When I return to America House after a visit, I am examined about the outcome of our games. If I have lost, I am razzed for losing to my mother; if I win, I get it for beating her. Win or lose, Mom's line is "Pretty good for a one-eyed old lady."

I try to visit Mom as often as possible, and I extend my stays when I can, but the burden of her care falls on Phil and Lois and especially the Penacook Place staff. We could not do without their skill and devotion. Many are immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, India and Nigeria. They add immeasurably to Mom's quality of life and the family's peace of mind.

They make it possible for her and so many others to make the last transition in dignity. The anti-immigrant crowd are thoroughly mistaken. These women and men keep the standard of life in America high. They are indeed ministering angels to the elderly—and their families.

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

America

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From April 22, 2002, Archbishop Harry J. Flynn on healing after the sexual abuse scandal. Plus six questions for Virginia M. Lucey and an audio interview with Karen Sue Smith. All at www.americamagazine.org.

It's in the Mail

E-mail is a wonderful thing. Quick and easy to use, it's an economical, paperless way to communicate with friends, family and colleagues. Who today would choose snail mail over the efficiency and speed of a T-1 line?

E-mail is a terrible thing. Far too quick and easy to use, it can easily stir up bad feelings when a note is misread, or sent to the wrong person by mistake. Oh, for the days of snail mail, when letters were properly reflected upon before being mailed.

E-mail has been around for quite a while now, and it is hard to imagine how we ever got along without it. Yet time has shown that it is an imperfect medium, too easily abused by capricious users. In office settings, e-mail can work like a contagion, carrying rumors and spreading resentment with lightning speed. Even among friends, the absence of tone in most e-mails can cause a reader to wonder: Now what did she mean by that?

What to do? According to David Shipley and Will Schwalbe, authors of *Send: The Essential Guide to E-mail Use for Office and Home*, e-mail should not be used in all situations. Got a problem with your boss? Set up an appointment. Need to explain something complicated to a friend? Pick up the phone. Shipley and Schwalbe also suggest peppering your e-mails with exclamation marks, to assure your correspondent of your genuine enthusiasm.

Of course, a simple punctuation mark cannot obscure the fact that e-mail users are human, vulnerable to anxiety and anger. We have tried to fashion technology to make our lives easier, yet too often it has made our flaws more apparent.

Moderating Voice

The grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh, has spoken out strongly once again to the youth of the kingdom, warning them not to go abroad to engage in jihad. In a message to his followers on Oct. 1, he deplored the manner in which the young have been exploited for shameful goals, saying that they are enthusiastic about their religion but lack the necessary level of knowledge to distinguish right from wrong. He said that by going abroad for jihad, youths commit a number of violations of Islamic rules and teachings, "including disobedience to our rulers. They fall to the attraction of deviant elements, using their enthusiasm to achieve political and military gains on behalf of suspicious groups."

Just as important as his advice to the young were his words of caution to those with financial means, that they not allow their money to hurt Muslims. We hope his words, coming as they did at the almsgiving period at the end of Ramadan, will be taken seriously. It would be easy for Westerners to dismiss this message, seeing it as political, supporting the Saudi rulers, or as too little too late. In fact, the mufti has long been critical of terrorism and those who support it. And in his message one sees a genuine concern for the well-being of his young people, who for the terrorists are no more than a commodity to be bought and sold.

We in the West have a responsibility to acknowledge initiatives, like the grand mufti's message and the recent letter of 133 Muslim leaders to Christian church leaders, as antidotes to the Islamophobia that has become commonplace.

Don't Rock the Boat

Newspapers in St. Paul, Minn., recently discovered that the University of St. Thomas had rescinded an invitation to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, to speak at the university about making friends out of your enemies. The rationale: In a 2002 talk at Boston University entitled "Occupation Is Oppression," Tutu attacked Israel's treatment of Palestinians, saying that in its ongoing humiliation of Palestinians "Israel is like Hitler and apartheid." Doug Hennes, St. Thomas's vice president for university and government relations, explained: "We had heard some things he said that some people judged to be anti-Semitic and against Israeli policy." Later, when the director of the university's peace and justice program revealed to Archbishop Tutu himself her reservations about the decision to withdraw the invitation, she was demoted.

One wonders about the state of conversation at universities today. Have we gotten to a point where the free and civil discussion of ideas essential to a university's mission has become beholden to the views of its benefactors or the "policy" of special interests? Are universities today basically clubs where like-minded adults come together to reinforce the validity of their own positions and teach young people to think like them? If these are the traits we model, what sort of world can we expect in the future?

The president of St. Thomas, the Rev. Dennis Dease, has since apologized for the decision and expressed a desire that the university might be involved "in fostering thoughtful conversation around difficult and highly charged issues." Such leadership is sorely needed. As matters stand at many institutions, Catholic and otherwise, it is unclear whether Jesus himself could make the cut.

Amnesty and Abortion

IT WAS BOTH UPSETTING AND PERPLEXING to learn that Amnesty International has decided to support a right to abortion as part of its worldwide campaign to stop violence against women. How can an organization dedicated to the protection of human rights oppose the right to life of unborn children? The Vatican has since condemned the move, and Cardinal Renato Martino, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, has called on Catholics to abandon support for the organization because of its pro-choice stance.

Amnesty's stated position is to support limited access to abortion, "with reasonable gestational limits, when [the woman's] health or human rights are in danger." This change, they explain, stems from the organization's long experience of the violence done to women throughout the world. In many countries the physical and sexual assault of women is a fact of everyday life: rape is used as a means of attacking an opposing tribe or militia, or of establishing one's domain; and pregnancy, even in the case of rape, can be cause for social ostracism. In parts of Nigeria women who have an abortion are subject to punishment by imprisonment or even death.

Amnesty's position thus emerges from its informed understanding of the plight of women in the violent, dangerous terrain of much of the developing world. Kate Gilmore, the executive deputy secretary general of the organization, says, "Amnesty International's position is not for abortion as a right but for women's human rights to be free of fear, threat and coercion as they manage all consequences of rape and other grave human rights violations."

For both its human rights work in general and its forthright desire to bring to light and to an end the violence toward women, Amnesty merits the world's gratitude and praise. Countries and peoples who allow such violence to occur should be denounced. Yet Amnesty's position on abortion remains deeply troubling. Terms like "the right to privacy," "unwanted pregnancy" and "reproductive rights," all of which the organization has used in discussing its position, suggest an alignment with exactly those dubious justifications for abortion that the church rightly opposes. Amnesty may see itself as taking its position strictly to defend against human rights violations; yet the danger of being co-opted by an entirely different agenda—and a different definition of "human rights"—looms large. Indeed, Amnesty USA's recent opposition to the Supreme Court ban on partial-birth abortions, on the grounds that it imposes criminal sanctions for doctors who provide these late-term abortions, shows the group already far afield from its human rights mission.

Amnesty's stand on abortion also embraces exactly the sort of utilitarian calculus used by those that it condemns. Amnesty should resist such calculations and continue to grapple instead with the tensions of the all too murky world in which it works.

Catholics, for their part, must continue to open their eyes to the suffering and injustice that Amnesty discloses, and work alongside Amnesty toward a world in which human rights are ensured and all forms of violence against women and children, including abortion, can be prevented. Members of the church who demand that Catholics boycott the organization should bear in mind that the church has long been capable of maintaining relationships with those with whom it disagrees, even on important issues. The Vatican rightly continues to reach out to China, for example, despite its human rights violations and its policy of forced abortions.

CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADERS ARE TO BE LAUDED for their willingness to challenge disturbing mores of society and to call all people and organizations, including Amnesty International, to be guided by the highest human values. Yet it is important for us to remember that while isolation may sometimes be an unhappy side effect of our Christian prophetic activity, it is not a prerequisite for it. The call by some to boycott Amnesty amounts to a sort of "nuclear option" that ignores the tremendous good that the organization does and the complicated, morally turgid world in which we live. To the extent that we refuse to acknowledge the complexities of this world and to grapple with them alongside Amnesty and others with whom we sometimes disagree, we serve only to diminish our own credibility.

Both the church and Amnesty International are fueled by concern for the lives of all human beings and passion against those who would betray those lives. Church officials would be wise to see Amnesty in this light, and Amnesty would do well to hear Catholic criticisms for what they are—expressions of profound concern by a longtime, like-minded friend.

Catholics, Orthodox Complete Text on Church Authority

Despite the absence of Russian Orthodox representatives, the international Catholic-Orthodox theological commission finished work on a document about church structure and authority. In a statement issued at the end of the Oct. 8-14 meeting in Ravenna, the commission said it had completed work on its document, *The Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church*. The document is expected to be published before the end of 2007, a participant told Catholic News Service. It examines the biblical foundations for seeing the church as a sacramental presence in the world and how responsibility and authority are exercised on the local, regional and universal levels. The commission's Oct. 14 statement said the next phase of the dialogue would focus on "the role of the bishop of Rome in the communion of the church in the first millennium."

Muslim Leaders See Theological Similarities

More than 100 senior Muslim leaders from around the world sent a letter to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders proposing theological similarities as a basis for peace and understanding. "Finding common ground between Muslims and Christians is not simply a matter for polite ecumenical dialogue between selected religious leaders," said the letter from 138 Muslim leaders, released Oct. 11 in Washington, D.C. Christians and Muslims "make up more than 55 percent of the world's population, making the relationship between these two religious communities the most important factor in contributing to meaningful peace around the world," they said. "If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace." As Muslims, "we say to Christians that we are not against them and that Islam is not against them—so long as they do not wage war against Muslims on account of their religion, oppress them and drive them out of their homes," they said.

Early Christian mosaic: "Christ Enthroned Surrounded by Angels (The Second Coming)," from the apse of the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. On Oct. 13, His Excellency Ioannis Zizioulas, metropolitan of Pergamo, presided over an Orthodox Divine Liturgy at the Basilica as part of the 10th plenary assembly of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox. Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY

Pope Names New Cardinals

Pope Benedict XVI named 23 new cardinals, including U.S. Archbishop John P. Foley, pro-grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, and U.S. Archbishop Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the first cardinal from a Texas diocese. The pope announced the names at the end of his weekly general audience Oct. 17 and said he would formally install the cardinals during a special consistory at the Vatican on Nov. 24. Cardinal-designate Foley was in St. Peter's Square when the announcement was made; he told Catholic News Service he had gone into the square, wading into the midst of the crowd, after going to a doctor's appointment. After the new cardinals are installed, there will be 121 potential papal electors. The nomination of cardinals-designate Foley and DiNardo brings to 17 the number of U.S. cardinals. Also among those named was Urbano Navarrete, S.J., 87, a distinguished professor of Canon Law and former rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

French Bishops Denounce Immigration Law Changes

France's Catholic bishops have denounced proposed immigration amendments that would allow the collection of ethnic data and introduce DNA testing for migrants seeking to join family members in the country. "Christians should refuse in principle to choose" between those migrants living illegally, or in secret, and those in the open, "or between citizens who carry papers and those without," the bishops said in a statement. "Whoever they are, they are our brothers and sisters in humanity." The Oct. 1 statement was published as lawmakers debated controversial amendments to France's 2006 immigration law. The bishops welcomed

parliamentary opposition to the proposed use of genetic tests, saying they risked "a grave disregard for the sense of the person and the dignity of the family." During talks with church leaders in April 2006, now-President Nicolas Sarkozy, who campaigned for tighter curbs on immigration before his May election, promised to listen to the church's viewpoint, the bishops added.

Regret Over World Military Spending, Health Care

Funneling resources toward military spending instead of providing basic health care to all citizens is making an already "sad landscape" even bleaker, a top Vatican official told the U.N. General Assembly. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Vatican nuncio to the United Nations, said Oct. 9 that the world community "seems to have been losing focus on the need to ensure the right to basic health care for all," although studies have shown even simple medical prevention can effectively and successfully improve the health and stability of society. The Vatican released a copy of his text Oct. 10. Archbishop Migliore said that "primary care is often neglected or replaced by more selective and even culturally divisive methods of health care." He said that "a saner health policy" would cover basic health care needs for all members of society and would help nations achieve some of the Millennium Development Goals, which include setting targets for reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating deadly diseases worldwide by 2015.

Southern U.S. the Most Charitable Region

Households in the south of the United States contributed a far greater portion of their income to charity than those in the Northeast in 2005, according to a new book on church giving. When the calculations of charitable giving are limited to those made to churches and religious organizations, the average annual expenditures by Southern households in 2005 were nearly twice that of households in the Northeast. *The State of Church Giving Through 2005*, which was published on Oct. 15, is the latest in a series of analyses produced by Empty Tomb, an Illinois church stewardship research and consulting company. The husband and wife research team of John and Sylvia Ronsvalle analyzed data on charitable giving from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey 2005, which put total charitable giving by Americans that year at $114.86 billion. Looking at charitable contributions as a percentage of after-tax income, the researchers found that Southerners gave 2.1 percent of their available income to charity, those in the Midwest 2 percent, those in the West 1.5 percent and those in the Northeast 1.2 percent.

Catholic Educators Praise New Legislation

The federal government hopes to make college more affordable through the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, effective Oct. 1. Catholic higher education officials interviewed by Catholic News Service gave high marks to the legislation because it is aimed at helping more students pay for college and graduate with less debt. It will reduce the interest rates on federal student loans to 3.4 percent from the current 6.6 percent. It also guarantees that loan recipients will not spend more than 15 percent of their annual income repaying loans and that loans will be forgiven after 25 years—10 years for those in public service.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

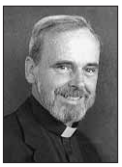
Former Superior General of Christian Brothers Dies

John Johnston, F.S.C., who was superior general of the De La Salle Christian Brothers from 1986 to 2000, died Oct. 11 at St. Francis Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. He was 73. Brother Johnston, a Memphis native, worked around the world in various assignments but returned to his hometown to stay in 2003. After he was diagnosed with cancer in 2006, he continued to participate in activities of the Christian Brothers.

In a letter to the Christian Brothers community, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, current superior general, said Brother Johnston "had a profound influence on brothers and lay Lasallians all over the world." He cited Brother Johnston's closeness to young people, his "spiritual depth and profound interior life" and his "extraordinary capacity for leadership." For the last decade, much of Johnston's work involved the shift from the "Christian Brothers school" model to the "Lasallian school" model, emphasizing the partnership between the brothers and laypeople in fostering the life and mission of the order's schools, especially as the number of brothers has decreased and lay involvement has increased. "The change of language is important," he once said. "A Lasallian school is a school that is 'animated,' not by the brothers with lay men and women in a supportive role, but by the entire educative community, in which the brothers participate."

John Johnston

Brother Johnston reflected on his own declining health in an April 2007 column posted on the order's Web site as the monthly reflection. In it he discussed the philosophy of "drinking the cup" that Jesus did. "To be a disciple of Jesus is to live with arms outstretched, in an attitude of yes to whatever God wills," he wrote. "It is to stand before the Father as Jesus did and to cry out, 'My Father, if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done.'"



Inevitability

'Twenty-eight years of two families in the White House?'

WHAT KIND of moral stance, what course of action can you take, when you seem to face a dreaded inevitability? I have encountered this quandary with respect to individuals heading off an ethical cliff. I see it in the absolute refusal to acknowledge that Americans might have to cut back on consumption, especially of nonrenewable resources. I have felt it sometimes when church leaders seem bent on an inexorable course of action that wounds the church itself. Presently, the context is political.

I do not expect that all or even most readers of this column will share my apprehension about two looming events that are beginning to seem inevitable to me: the election of President Hillary Clinton and the bombing of Iran. But here goes.

I find it rather hard to imagine that this country will see fit to bestow the presidency of the United States on two families for 28 years. But if Hillary Clinton is elected next year and then re-elected, which is likely, that is exactly what will have happened: 28 years of a father and his son, a husband and his wife. Do we really believe a deliberative democracy could produce this result?

Just as the emergence of George W. Bush in 1998 had the feel of some relentless, unavoidable undertow, so now Hillary Clinton has suddenly become the presumed Democratic nominee, as if it is "her turn." She's everywhere. Despite the mountain of money she has raised, almost an entire issue of Newsweek has been donated to Hillary-reality. As soon as I saw the cover, "Women & Power: Do Women Really Lead Differently Than Men?" I suspected it was all about her. Even though she is mentioned only once in a 23-page treatment of women in leadership, lo and behold, the big, four-color lead page for the feature article had images of Queen Elizabeth I, Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Cleopatra, Catherine the Great and, wonder of wonders, Hillary Clinton.

When you read The Editor's Desk column on the flip side of the contents page, you find out it really is all about Hillary. The editor, Jon Meacham, writes: "Would she, because of her gender, rule differently?… Are women really more nurturing, or better consensus-builders? Or do they have to be tougher than they might otherwise be to show they can play the game the way men do?" Perhaps Thatcher, Elizabeth I and the once Queen of Russia suggest an answer: They were warmakers, like men.

Our sitting president will himself be known as a warmaker. It is hard to imagine that he will be remembered for little else than the Iraq war, whether we win it or lose it—whatever those terms may mean.

In order to win this war, however, he may yet start another one. Almost all of the rhetoric used to justify the invasion of Iraq is now being employed with respect to Iran.

In late August at an American Legion Convention in Nevada, President Bush invoked the familiar "shadow of a nuclear holocaust" rising because of Iran's "murderous" influence in Iraq, this despite the judgment of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Mohamed ElBaradei (the same man we ignored before invading Iraq) that Iran's nuclear program is confined to domestic energy production. The president went on to claim that Iran is "the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism," the very face of evil seeking to enslave the Middle East, and said, "I have authorized our military commanders in Iraq to confront Tehran's murderous activities." My! What next?

Next was Gen. David Petraeus reporting to Congress. A decent and intelligent man subjected to the bloviation of politicians right and left (as well as overt disrespect from some on the left), Petraeus was nonetheless alarming in his portrayal of Iran, which, "through the use of the Quds Force, seeks to turn the Iraqi Special Groups into a Hezbollah-like force to…fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq." In other words, they are attacking us. Is this, once again, a march to inevitable war?

One might have expected that Democrats who have been posturing as opponents to the president's war policy would resist the tug of inevitable conflict with Iran. On the contrary: in the spring of '07 the candidates Clinton, Obama and Dodd voted to ask the State Department to term the Iranian Army a terrorist organization. In late September, the war hawks wanted more. They themselves voted 76 to 22 to brand Iran's Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization. Biden, Dodd and Obama were not numbered among the 29 Democrats who voted a free pass for another bombing escapade. The inevitable Senator Clinton was. Although resenting anyone who might question her consistency or motivation (as Randall Rolph, an ordinary citizen, found out during a frosty exchange with Clinton in Iowa), she has indeed shown she has what it takes to wage pre-emptive war.

And so the two inevitabilities meet. Clinton again and war again.

A redemptive thought is this. If Hillary Clinton is inevitable as the Democratic nominee, and if she is opposed by the pro-choice Republican Rudy Giuliani (whose foreign policy advisor is Norman Podhoretz, author of "The Case for Bombing Iran: I hope and pray that President Bush will do it" [The Wall Street Journal, 5/30]), perhaps conscientious Catholics will be told they can vote for neither under pain of sin.

Or perhaps, since presidents can do little to stop abortion, Catholics will be advised to vote for someone who supports life in matters of elective wars, medical care for the poor, decent treatment of immigrants, education reform and sharing our material gifts with the world's desperate and dying.

John F. Kavanaugh

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

ART BY MICHAEL O'NEILL McGRATH, O.S.F.S.

We need diverse models of discipleship.

Holy Men and Women

– BY DREW CHRISTIANSEN –

FOR SOME TIME, ANGLICAN CHURCHES have been expanding their calendars of saints to include notable religious leaders and thinkers who are not, and probably would not be, officially designated as saints by the Catholic Church. The Church of England's calendar, for example, includes great leaders like William Wilberforce (an opponent of the slave trade), Bartolomeo de las Casas (a Dominican defender of Native Americans), C. S. Lewis (an apologist), Florence Nightingale (a nurse and social reformer) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (a theologian and Hitler-resister).

The list is replete with poets like John Donne, George Herbert and Christina Rosetti. It also contains many Catholic saints of recent vintage, like the anti-British Joan of Arc, and post-Reformation Catholics, like Philip Neri, Francis de Sales and John

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J., is the editor in chief of **America**. This article is an adaptation of a paper given at the second Mennonite-Catholic Martyrs Conference at Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., in 2003, and published in *Martyrdom in an Ecumenical Perspective: A Mennonite-Catholic Conversation*, Peter C. Erb, ed. (Pandora, 2007).

Bosco. With the inclusion of figures like John Henry Newman and Charles de la Foucauld, moreover, it even anticipates the official Catholic canonization process.

In recent years we have also seen books, like Robert Ellsberg's *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets and Other Witnesses for Our Time* (Orbis, 1997) and *My Life With the Saints*, by James Martin, S.J. (Loyola 2006), that mix the lives of saints with those of uncanonized figures. And modern-day icons have also proved highly popular, like those produced by Bridgebuilding Icons of Burlington, Vt., which depict images of saints not well known today, like Aelred of Rievaulx, as well as highly popular but not yet canonized "saints" like Oscar Romero and Dorothy Day.

Martyrial Ecumenism

Even official Catholic observances have shared in this trend. During the Jubilee of 2000 Pope John Paul II chose to honor Protestant as well as Catholic martyrs of the 20th century as a matter of common witness. In a 1995 visit to Slovakia for the beatification of three Catholic martyrs, he acknowledged Protestants executed by Catholics in the Counter-Reformation:

> How can we fail to acknowledge, for example, the spiritual greatness of twenty-four members of the evangelical churches who were killed at Presov? To them and to all who accepted suffering and death out of fidelity to the dictates of their conscience the church gives praise and expresses admiration.

To underscore his words, John Paul also paid silent homage to these martyrs at a monument to their memory in the city square of Presov. Some have referred to this as John Paul's martyrial ecumenism. Indeed, in his address on the occasion he declared that the witness of Christian martyrs of all denominations in the 20th century "is a heritage which speaks more powerfully than all the causes of division. The ecumenism of the martyrs and the witnesses to the faith is the most convincing of all; to the Christians of the 21st century it shows the path to unity."

These developments in liturgy, devotional reading, popular piety and official ecumenism suggest a desire to honor a wider range of Christians and religious leaders of other traditions than any traditional martyrology or calendar of saints does. The existing official collections, even when expanded to include more lay people, married people and non-Europeans, still do not honor the many men and women who have nurtured our faith, witnessed in an eminent way to the Gospel or strengthened the life of the church.

Martyrs were the earliest saints, and martyrologies like the listing in the Roman Canon were the earliest lists of

saints. Memories of such sacrifices are important in the formation of Christians and of the Christian community. They keep us mindful of the value of our faith. As long as we recall our martyrs, "taking up the cross" remains more than a scriptural metaphor for enduring the little inconveniences of life. Believers learn that witnessing to the Gospel has been personally costly and that, whatever the security of our local church today, we ultimately live in "a vale of tears."

As Peter Brown relates in *The Cult of the Saints* (Univ. Chicago, 1980) and as every reader of Ellis Peters's Brother Cadfael mysteries knows, the cult of the saints that originated with the veneration of martyrs' remains brought standing to the community and locale associated with their lives, their sufferings and their miracles. Today as well, a canonization of Opus Dei's Josémaria Escrivá or Mother Teresa of Calcutta lends legitimacy and prestige to their followers, validating their styles of spirituality and the distinctive charisms of their foundations. The teachings of theologians and the writings of mystics also receive greater standing when their authors are publicly honored as saints. In the church's liturgy, official recognition also attests to the intercessory power of the saint.

Models of Holiness

The first Western saint who was neither a martyr nor a confessor (someone who suffered imprisonment and torture for the faith) was St. Martin of Tours, a soldier convert who became a monk, bishop and missionary. The pre- and post-Vatican II sacramentaries recognize a variety of saints: doctors (that is, teachers), pastors, kings and queens, virgins and religious, missionaries and so on. In our own day, a principal motive for naming new saints has been to provide accessible models of the Christian life. That is why Pope John Paul II was set on canonizing so many lay people and people from a wide range of nationalities. He canonized 483 people and beatified more than 1,300, more than all who had been so recognized between the the Council of Trent and the beginning of his pontificate.

In his book *The Catholic Heritage* (Crossroad, 1985), Lawrence Cunningham has provided historical surveys of different types of Christians: soldiers, theologians, mystics, monks, reformers and social workers, to name a few. The different kinds of exemplary Christians suggest how rich the company of saints is. The terminology of sanctity keeps expanding even for martyrs. People now speak of martyrs for nonviolence, martyrs of charity (like Maximilian Kolbe, who was killed in place of an intended victim) and martyrs for human dignity (like Archbishop Romero and Bishop Juan Gerardi of Guatemala, who were killed for their defense of human rights). The Jesuit sacramentary contains prayers for victims of Christian disunity.

Sanctity as Conversion

In an earlier book, *The Meaning of Saints* (Harper & Row 1980), Cunningham proposed that the exemplary character of sainthood is the most important consideration for people today. That is not to dismiss the intercessory role or the place of the miracles, but to say that saints are of greatest interest to us as models of discipleship. "No devotion to the saints is more acceptable to God," Erasmus wrote, "than the imitation of their virtues…. Do you want to honor St. Francis? Then give away your wealth to the poor, restrain your evil impulses, and see in everyone you meet the image of Christ."

Cunningham refers to secular saints—men or women of no evident faith or even professed nonbelievers who possess such integrity of life, such uncompulsive and tolerant clarity of vision and such subordination of their own interests to the service of humanity that the only word that comes close to describing them is "saint." While not Christian (in *The Catholic Heritage* he calls them "outsiders"), they appear to others to be Christlike. As an example he cites Dr. Rieux, the protagonist in Albert Camus's novel *The Plague*. I have known individuals who, while their lack of faith puzzled me, led lives of such goodness that, for lack of another word, they could only be described as "holy."

The phenomenon of the secular saint prompts one to ask, what is sanctity? In general, I would suggest, holiness consists in integrity of life, such a thoroughgoing goodness that it seems to exceed all deliberate human effort. For that reason, even incidental flaws in one's biography may raise questions about an individual's holiness. Blessed Charles de Foucauld, a French soldier of fortune turned desert solitary, inspired several distinctive religious congregations of Little Brothers and Sisters and is nearly universally admired, but the fact that he supplied information on German troop movements in Africa to his French countrymen during the First World War is thought to have impeded for many years his march to canonization.

A Test of Orthodoxy?

There is a canard that if you anticipate being canonized (or being made a bishop), you should commit nothing to writing. For a confessional memoir or a theological doubt put in print is likely to hold up one's process. In my view, such impediments are secondary. During the Reformation, Brad Gregory explains in *Salvation at Stake* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), a virtuous life over time and a courageous, holy death were eventually devalued as tests of martyrdom, and orthodoxy became the ultimate test of a true martyr. At other times, however, suspicions of heresy were no bar to sainthood. Some of the positions of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, were formally condemned in his day; and more recently we have Pope John Paul honoring the witness of Protestant martyrs of the Reformation. What really is at stake in naming saints, it seems to me, is the holiness of a life. How thoroughly converted was a person?

> Saints are thoroughly converted people, especially in the way they deal with their own weaknesses and failings.

Christians may be admirable for a variety of qualities and still be flawed. St. Jerome, for example, appears to me to be a saint by virtue of the Mediterranean "big man" theology: if you are a larger-than-life personality with enough devoted followers and powerful connections, on your death you are named a saint. Despite all his learning, his devotion to Scripture and holy places, as well as his austerities, Jerome was irascible, ever ready to engage in controversy. Except for the church's tradition, it would be very hard for me to think of him as a saint. As I see it, sanctity involves a completeness of conversion that Jerome, with his tempestuous temperament, did not exhibit (See John W. Donohue, "Holy Terrors," **America**, 5/13/1995).

We can identify other saintly figures with possible flaws. Mother Teresa, despite her service of the poor, was criticized by Christopher Hitchens and others for her refusal to engage issues of justice. We might also consider Reinhold Niebuhr, as influential a theologian as we had in 20th-century America and a thinker from whom we still learn. One of the great puzzles of Niebuhr's life, however, is how with every shift of his political ideas and commitments, he turned his back on his old friends. In that respect, there seems to have been something hard in him that was neither humane nor holy.

Or think of the proponents of nonviolence whose anger against the military or adherents of the just war theory mars their commitment to peace. Christianity is the central fact in the lives of all these Christians, but their lives are flawed in this respect: certain dimensions of their personalities have not been converted. They are saints in the generic sense that they belong among those who have been saved by Christ; they model certain Christian virtues. They may have made great contributions to the life of the church, but their sanctification still seems lacking in some significant way.

Neurotic Saints

This is not to say that flawed people cannot become recognized saints. Saints have their faults. John Berchmans, one of the Jesuit "boy saints," quipped that his greatest cross was "the common life." (Today's Jesuits say his brothers probably felt the same way about John.) We all are sinners, but the notion of sanctity involves such thoroughgoing conversion that Christ shines through despite our faults and weaknesses.

Are there neurotic saints? I think so. St. Francis of Assisi was not called *pazzo*, crazy, for nothing. But whatever great things we may have done, whatever "little way" we may have followed, or whatever our failings, the final test is whether others can perceive that we are "new men and women" in Christ. Two of the Jesuit North American martyrs, Jean de Brébeuf and Noel Chabanel, illustrate the point.

Brébeuf was a hearty Norman peasant who could best his Native American captors in paddling a canoe or playing their games. He was generally admired and so brave in facing death that his slayers cut out his heart and ate it in testimony to his courage. Chabanel, by contrast, was an aristocrat who felt out of place among the tribes. Everything about their life grated on him, and he acutely feared torture and death, but he too is venerated as a saint. Even today, Brébeuf is the more appealing character; but because Chabanel endured his life and death for Christ, we regard him also as a saint.

A saint can have great human weaknesses but even in them be made holy. One reason asceticism played such a strong role in traditional Catholic spirituality was that it was considered evidence of the desire to convert. While Chabanel's martyrdom makes the issue somewhat moot, his struggle to overcome his inbred fastidiousness and his natural revulsion at the natives' way of life demonstrates a heroic desire to love the people to whom he had been sent.

Mother Teresa's cause rose in my estimation when I learned some years ago, prior to the publication of *Mother Teresa: Come, Be My Light* (Doubleday 2007), that after the mystical experiences that led Mother Teresa to found the Missionaries of Charity, she prayed without consolation for the rest of her life. An exceptionally dedicated life of service, like hers, shows a deep level of conversion when it is done in the midst of the "dark night." Saints are women and men we regard as thoroughly converted, especially in the way they have dealt with their own failings and weaknesses.

So when we look to saints and martyrs today as models for ourselves, we should find not only men and women of virtue for us to emulate, but also flawed human beings, whose personal struggles to respond to God's grace in their weakness led to the transformation of their characters. For us these women and men are tests of our own willingness to be thoroughly converted. How we are conformed to Christ in our weakness is the test of holiness for us all. A

Church Records and the Courts

Recent court rulings undermine the church's promise of confidentiality.

BY WILLIAM W. BASSETT

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/FRANZISKA RICHTER

CATHOLICS SHOULD RECOGNIZE that a sea change is taking place in jurisprudence in the United States concerning the rights of religious institutions. The issue is confidentiality, the promise of privacy that lies at the core of the right to free exercise of religion protected by the First Amendment. Caught in storms of conflict over the crisis caused by sexual abuse of minors by members of the Catholic clergy, bishops and religious superiors can no longer assure the faithful, including priests and religious, of the confidentiality of sensitive personal communications outside the narrow strictures of the priest-penitent privilege in the sacrament of reconciliation.

A settlement reached in July 2007 by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles of more than 500 cases of sexual abuse illustrates the danger. The total of $660 million, or about $1.3 million per plaintiff, is the largest compensation paid to victims of sexual abuse by clergy of the Catholic Church in the United States to date. Earlier in the year the archdiocese, its insurers and various religious orders had paid $114 million to settle the claims of 86 victims alleging abusive incidents that dated back to 1930, recorded in 75 years of files.

In September a settlement announced by plaintiffs and the dioceses of San Diego and San Bernardino, after defendants withdrew from their earlier bankruptcy filing, provided $198.1 million to 144 plaintiffs, or about $1.4 million apiece, to be apportioned by the court. This proposal, still pending, was executed by the dioceses to avoid 42 scheduled jury trials. It doubled their initial offer in settlement negotiations, covering allegations of sexual abuse by priests between 1938 and 1993, with most in the 1960s and '70s.

These settlements, like earlier agreements, called for release to the public of confidential chancery files. These were essential, plaintiffs urged, because they could reveal what leaders of the archdiocese knew about the cases, when they knew it, and whether they had been, in effect, involved in a course of deception and secrecy concerning the sexual abuse of minors by their institutional employees. Many of the priests involved in these cases had been moved from parish to parish when accusations arose or returned to parish service after therapy. Money alone, the argument went, could not assuage the victims' lifelong trauma from childhood sexual abuse; transparency, not only apology, was needed for future assurances once trust had been betrayed.

Patterns of Settlements

The California settlements follow a pattern: staggering sums of money for compensatory and sometimes punitive damages, plus fees and costs of litigation (nearly 40 percent of the total, or $264 million, went to lawyers and forensic accountants). And the settlements were accompanied by court orders for disclosure of confidential personnel files to assure the complete vindication of the victims. Examples of other diocesan settlements include Boston (2003), $85 million for 552 claims; Louisville (2003), $25.7 million for 243 claims; Orange (2004), $100 million for 90 claims; Oakland (2005), $56 million for 56 claims; and Covington (2006), $84 million for 350 claims. All required disclosure of files containing "credible or substantial complaints of sexual

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abuse of children."

Where dioceses have declared bankruptcy, a similar settlement pattern includes: Tucson (2005), $22 million for 50 claims; Portland (2007), $75 million for 175 claims, with $20 million set aside; Spokane (2007), $48 million for 150 plaintiffs. Portland was ordered to file 50,000 pages in bankruptcy proceedings, which are now available to researchers. Davenport, Iowa, is pending. There are no secrets in bankruptcy. Not even previously executed "confidential" settlements are immune from bankruptcy statutes voiding preferences and fraudulent debtor payouts.

This is unprecedented in American legal history. In addition to the loss of resources, the cost to the church has been compounded by the lowering of the First Amendment shield protecting the confidentiality of religious records. A firestorm of opprobrium has turned against church leaders, who are presumed to have been able to prevent such horrendous crimes.

The faithful are paying an enormous price. The crime of sexual abuse of children is so abhorrent, and so outrageous when perpetrated by members of the clergy or other trusted adults, that only political naïveté could suggest a relaxation of the laws of evidence. The rush to transparency, however, may be counterproductive.

Types of Chancery Records

Religious organizations keep financial and administrative records according to legal requirements. No one disputes the right of the public to this information or the authority of the courts to demand discovery of these files when appropriate. Here there is a welcome, growing transparency in church management standards.

Churches also keep records of spiritual communications between pastors and faithful, counselors and clients, concerning matters of conscience. The special archives of chanceries and religious orders store such records under an assurance in canon law that they will not be divulged to the public without consent. Cases heard in marriage tribunals, documents recording the administration of sacraments, personal seminary and novitiate reports, ordinations and missionings, dispensations and admonitions, disciplinary matters affecting status and good standing in the church—these are all matters of religious faith.

No civil judge is empowered, in our system of government, to interpret the properly spiritual records of a church, let alone equate them with employment contracts or financial transactions for purposes of discovery. No state, however, provides an evidentiary shield by statute for such institutional records, even though they are by nature highly personal and confidential. Federal rules mirror those of the states of trial.

Accusation of sexual impropriety strips the accused of privacy; it casts a pall of suspicion upon colleagues. An accused priest must be suspended until the cloud is dispersed. That is a public act that mandates notification of Roman authorities, according to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (2002) and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing With Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, construing Canons 1720 and 1721, even as amended in 2006 to include a presumption of innocence. The accuser must also come forward. At present the church cannot prevent this kind of personal notoriety from discovery orders of civil courts. Releasing confidential church records to the media further destroys any pretense to confidentiality.

Losing Religious Confidentiality

Unlimited civil discovery, in effect, undermines the protections for victims and accused as provided by the charter and review boards, because such discovery threatens the assurance of privacy that is often necessary to discover the truth. Who will be completely candid with religious counselors once they realize the danger of personal and family exposure in the press?

On matters of confidentiality, canon law is clear-cut and extremely strict; in some cases violating confidentiality is a formal crime against church law. Yet church leaders should no longer be under the delusion that the civil courts will respect canon law as a matter of free exercise. The role of government under the Constitution is secular, not subsidiary to religion. It must make decisions based on secular criteria that do not favor religious institutions or appeal to religious faith. Demands of victims for compensation and punishment that, in effect, deprive church personnel files of any claim to privacy will continue in both criminal and tort litigation for years to come.

In the past decade more than a dozen state courts reported litigation challenging limitations upon discovery of church personnel files, whether for the use of grand juries, prosecutors, civil plaintiffs or the press. Similar liti-

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/RYAN R. FOX

gation involved testimonial privileges, such as those protecting priest and penitent, attorney and client, and psychotherapist and patient. Several well-known canon lawyers have appeared as expert witnesses on both sides of the issues, and new studies have been produced. All of this appeared against a din of negative publicity and op-ed pieces accusing religious leaders of "stonewalling," "conspiracy" and "cover-up," running up punitive judgments, not just against perpetrators, as should be the case, but against the dioceses.

Perhaps the nadir was reached in 2002 when Superior Court Judge Constance Sweeney ordered the Archdiocese of Boston not only to turn over to plaintiffs but to release to the public 11,000 documents and files (nearly 40,000 pages). Shortly thereafter the Diocese of Manchester was ordered to produce 9,000 pages under similar conditions.

More recently, Judge Peter Lichtman of the Los Angeles Superior Court ordered the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to make public 3,000 pages of insurance records and hundreds of pages from the files of a pedophile clergyman transferred to California in 1981. Last year the Archdiocese of Milwaukee agreed to pay eight California victims of this one predatory priest $13.3 million, in addition to nearly $15 million the victims had received in 2004 from the Diocese of Orange. Under the earlier settlement, the priest's personnel files from California were made public. The perpetrator died in 2003 after leaping from a hotel balcony in Mexico.

Smaller-scale examples are cases in Altoona-Johnstown, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cincinnati, Louisville, Los Angeles and Phoenix. Elsewhere, the records appear by reference in public reports of trials and appeals, settlements and bankruptcies. Very few reported cases restrict scrutiny of church files to in-camera review by plaintiffs' attorneys.

The Most Recent Discovery Litigation

Consider the most recent discovery litigation. On notice of an accusation of clerical sexual misconduct, the initial procedural step to be taken by a bishop under the *Essential Norms* is an immediate investigation. In the words of the vicar for the clergy of Los Angeles, Msgr. Craig Cox, "The involved priest is encouraged to discuss whatever problems he is experiencing regarding chastity...encouraged to communicate his deepest psychological and sexual issues, to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment, and to share the results of this therapy with the bishop or his vicar." These records are to be kept separate from the priest's normal personnel file and protected under the most stringent canonical obligation of confidentiality.

In July 2002, the Los Angeles grand jury issued subpoenas *duces tecum* (a summons to appear bringing tangible evidence for use at a hearing or trial) with regard to 285 documents in the possession of the archbishop. The custodian of the chancery archives produced these in sealed cartons to be safeguarded by the district attorney, pending appeal. Among the documents were transcripts and reports of accused priests induced to seek assistance by the promise of confidentiality.

The church and two of the accused priests petitioned for a writ of mandate, seeking to prevent disclosure of the documents. They urged constitutional protection under the First Amendment, the state constitution and evidentiary privileges. A court-appointed referee cherry-picked the documents and discarded 53, but substantially rejected motions to quash the rest. Presiding Judge Joan Klein of the Court of Appeal wrote to affirm the state's right of discovery of all but one, and that on relevancy bases. There was no dissent. Rehearing was denied by the state supreme court and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

On April 17, 2006, the cartons were unsealed, retained counsel informed of the availability of the files, law clerks called in to dissect the evidence of culpability, and Los Angeles Times reporters alerted to give it publicity. Lawyers representing alleged victims suing the archdiocese later filed successful motions for further discovery to litigate the claims and certify additional plaintiffs.

Supported by the Supreme Court

Guiding the state courts' interpretation of the religion clauses of the Constitution was the Supreme Court's rule, crafted by Justice Antonin Scalia in the Native American peyote case of 1990 (the full title is Employment Division, Dept. of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith): "The right of free exercise does not relieve an individual of the obligation to comply with a 'valid and neutral law of general applicability on the ground that the law proscribes (or prescribes) conduct that his religion prescribes (or proscribes).'" The Supreme Court added in 1993 that "a law that is neutral and of general applicability need not be justified by a compelling governmental interest even if the law has the incidental effect of burdening a particular religious practice." State laws of evidence, the appellate court found, are neutral and of general applicability. They target neither a church nor religion in general; thus their burdening effect is incidental, not direct.

In the Los Angeles case, Judge Klein wrote, "The Archdiocese simultaneously had been engaged in the kind of routine investigation any employer would undertake upon learning a trusted employee had been accused of child molestation." She held, in effect, that the church was no different than a business and that a bishop's relationships with his clergy is legally the same as a corporation's employment policies. The state's interest in compelling production of all material evidence trumped that of the church in protecting its confidential religious records. Discovery orders were weighed by formalities of good cause, relevancy, execution and breadth—nothing more. The state had a rational basis for forcing production of evidence, the court ruled.

No Legislative Protection

Only the state legislature could relieve the target of subpoena of the civic duty to disclose. This it had not done. Citing parallel cases in Illinois, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, the court held that the church's practice of maintaining a secret archive for files relating to internal church discipline (Canon 489) was no deterrent to the state's compelling interest in discovery.

There is no constitutional limit on the information the state may require of a religious organization under sanction of contempt. "Except as otherwise provided by statute…no person has a privilege to refuse to disclose any matter or to refuse to produce any writing, object, or other thing" (Cal. Evid. Code §911). The sweeping authority of government in other jurisdictions is the same.

In personal injury cases plaintiffs seek proof of causation from the prospective source of substantial compensation—that is, the "deep pocket." Discovery orders, therefore, are both specific in respect to the perpetrator of the injury and general in respect to the responsibility of the church itself to

protect the victim. Personal injury litigation concerning religious organizations may involve much more extensive, even blanket, discovery of relevant documentation over a period of time to ascertain patterns of negligence, such as knowingly reassigning abusive clergy to parishes or positions where it may be foreseen they may strike at victims again. Blanket production of this extensive documentation involves information about dozens and dozens of people, lay and clergy, produced at great expense.

As a result the church cannot avoid the discovery of relevant information in court by putting it in a place designated by canon law as a "secret archive." The legal norm is "relevancy." The exception is "privilege." That is a matter of legislation.

A New Pastoral Protocol

I am not advancing an argument for church immunity, a new exemption from the rules of evidence or for extending the priest/penitent privilege. Instead, I suggest that we need a new protocol for dealing with the possibility of public disclosure of the church's most confidential records. We must discard the illusion that the church can command some special favor of the courts not available to other social institutions.

Outside the narrow confines of the priest-penitent, attorney-client and physician-patient privileges, no agency of the church can assure any person of complete confidentiality. Confidentiality may be promised of communications within the church, but it cannot be guaranteed against outside claims upon evidence. All persons should know that their letters, testimony, depositions and communications with church authorities may be subject to public disclosure in future litigation. No one can be guaranteed protection of their innermost secrets except in the context of sacramental confession.

Archival materials of all kinds must be professionally managed. Employees of religious organizations should have access to their personnel files, so that they may rebut false accusations. Periodic review of files should clean out rumors, hearsay, anonymous notes and unsubstantiated claims that can be misinterpreted in civil litigation. This is good stewardship of records, not the destruction of evidence.

Finally, when serious allegations of crime are leveled by authorities against anyone (priest, religious or lay employee), that person is entitled to representation by a civil lawyer and, ideally, a canon lawyer to meet his or her need of professional, unbiased counsel and advice. Canonical processes of sanction, such as suspension or dismissal from office, without providing the accused the right to adequate counsel, are void from their inception. A

From **America**'s archives: Archbishop Harry J. Flynn on the sexual abuse crisis, from April 22, 2002, at **www.americamagazine.org.**

Comfort the Sorrowful

Parents of abuse victims in Boston support each other.

BY VIRGINIA M. LUCEY

FIVE YEARS AGO, the scandal of sexual abuse of children by members of the clergy shook the Catholic Church in Boston and spread to other Catholic centers in the United States. In the interim much has been said and written: accusations and counteraccusations, expressions of outrage, prolonged litigation, public humiliation. Church attendance and revenues, particularly here in Boston, have decreased; and a shroud of sadness seems to surround the Catholic community.

Has anything positive happened in Boston in the wake of the scandal? The press seems preoccupied with the negative consequences, unwilling or perhaps unable to recognize moments of light in an otherwise dark story. I would like to tell a part of the story that deserves wider recognition: how wounded families can help one another.

In 2002, the Archdiocese of Boston established the Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach to victims of sexual abuse by members of the clergy. It is staffed by four licensed social workers and an administrative assistant, who have worked tirelessly and with quiet compassion in this special ministry. I am also a member of that staff. Neither a psychologist nor a social worker, I am a registered nurse with a unique qualification for the ministry: I am the mother of a victim.

One of my sons revealed in 1990 that when he was 11 years old, he was sexually abused by a parish priest. My son had kept this secret for 17 years. As a mother, I believe that no child should keep such a secret for 17 seconds, never mind 17 years. He had given me important information, but I didn't know what to do with it, so I kept the secret for another 10 years. Later I discovered that others had acted similarly.

ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

Forming a Support Group

A year before the sexual abuse scandal became public, I received a phone call from a former neighbor, who wanted to talk to me about her son and his experience with the same priest. Then I received another call, and another. One night in January 2001, nine mothers met in a living room and exchanged horror stories about the experiences of their children. As we told our stories we were slowly shocked into silence as we realized that so much had gone on, and we had known nothing. We wept, we embraced and for the first time realized what had happened. The things we had once heard and considered gossip were true. We shared faces and names and understood each other's pain. We were not alone anymore. There were no more secrets, no more questions—except why?

At the end of that evening, I asked what the group wanted to do next. They said they wanted to meet again the following month, and we did. We have been meeting every month for the past six years. Dads have joined us and are very engaged and active.

Working Through the Diocese

Shortly after the scandal broke in 2002, I had the good fortune of meeting Barbara Thorp, the director of the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach. She had heard about the parents' group and invited me to work with her office, helping parents of victims.

What we parents knew so well was the fact that an entire family is affected by the tragedy of the sexual abuse of a child. We had watched our children decline, fall into drug and alcohol abuse, fail to perform at school, lose jobs, abandon relationships, become unable to function in the family or society, and we hadn't known why. We maintained our homes as best we could; we worked, paid mortgages, cooked meals, like other families. We were good at hiding our secret sorrows, while wondering what went wrong. Siblings were affected as well; no one escaped.

VIRGINIA M. LUCEY is family outreach coordinator for the Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach in the Archdiocese of Boston.

The professional women at the Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach understood and appreciated the impact that sexual abuse had on families. When I came on staff we were not quite sure how to begin, but things fell into place quickly. When victims contacted the office, they were asked if their parents would be interested in talking to me and learning about our group of parents. If they agreed, I would call, set up a meeting either in their home or in a place where they were comfortable, listen to their stories and invite them to our support group meetings.

Not everyone accepts the invitation. Some just need to be heard and comforted. The fact that I am a parent of a victim immediately breaks down barriers and helps to establish trust. Others welcome the opportunity to be with parents like themselves. Some parents called me without their child knowing it. They were concerned about the victim and felt as though there was nowhere to turn. Our group is unique in that we share stories that no one else in our communities, churches or families can understand. The reaction of those who think that victims and their families should "just get over it and move on" is not only insensitive but hurtful; it isolates us once again. Such a dismissal is particularly painful when it comes from those associated with the Catholic Church.

Facing Lost Possibilities

Contrary to what some may believe, we are not dysfunctional families; quite the opposite, we are well-educated, professional people who have been and are involved with our children. We live the enduring results of sexual abuse every day. So do our children. Who can measure what has been lost? Educations, professional possibilities and personal relationships have forever been affected. Those untouched by such tragedy cannot understand the pain we suffer as we watch these childhood victims, now young adults, struggle.

We are as good as our children are. If they are doing well, we are doing well; if they are having bad times, we are having bad times. A good day is when parents can say their child has been sober for another month, or was promoted in a job that is below his educational level. A good day is when their child moves out of a sober house into her own apartment. A bad day is a relapse or downward slide.

The support group is our lifeline. We may be in different places emotionally, but we are there for one another. Support is our survival, and when we survive, we are stronger for our children. One family, however, found it necessary to relocate to another state because the victim could not return home without danger of relapse.

Families wounded by sexual abuse can help heal other victims and their families.

Sustained by Faith

We are all in a better place than six years ago. The anger is there, but it is not as volatile. Pain is always there, but it is now more manageable. We will always grieve the loss of our children's potential, the betrayal of their promise. But above all we have hope. Our hope is for a better future for us all. We are all still proactive, churchgoing Catholics. If our church did not sustain us, our faith did. We would not let that be taken away as well. And we have formed a bond of love, trust and friendship. We are a church within our church; we care for one another as Jesus has instructed us. We never know what may happen in a meeting, what will be said or what need will be voiced, but God's spirit is there guiding us, somehow gently leading us. We also have a strong covenant of confidentiality; what is said at a meeting stays there. Trust is the foundation of our friendship.

Litigation and settlements have helped many victims to establish lives that were interrupted, but have harmed others who have fallen back into dangerous ways. Some victims have been able to go back to school or buy a home; one was able to adopt a baby from China. Many have received the professional counseling they so desperately need.

I wish to give credit where credit is due. Less than two months after his installation as Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Sean O'Malley met 25 families of victims in a home south of Boston. He came and listened to our stories for nearly three hours. He prayed for us and with us and blessed us, and he continues to be available to victims and their families to this day. Cardinal O'Malley's support is unwavering.

What next?

Can the church now go back to business as usual? There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done; it is a daunting task that must continue. The consequences will affect future generations. Part of our process of healing is outreach. There are many families experiencing this sadness, and we wish to share what we have, to make known that we exist. We want to console those whose lives have been shattered, welcome them, and be with them in their time of need.

We are just a small link in a long arduous process, but great change often comes from the grass roots. As one mother said, "We shall rise from the ashes." Together we can and will survive. We do not ask for money or time but for prayers for us and our families. We have not heard such petitions in our Sunday liturgical prayers of the faithful. Instead, we have often been told that parishioners are "discomforted" by reminders of the sex abuse scandal. But Jesus never avoided discomforting situations. He was in the midst of them, listening with compassion and comforting the sorrowful. Henri Nouwen writes: "Indeed, we need to be angels for each other, to give each other strength and consolation. Because only when we fully realize that the cup of life is not only a cup of sorrow but also a cup of joy, will we be able to drink it."

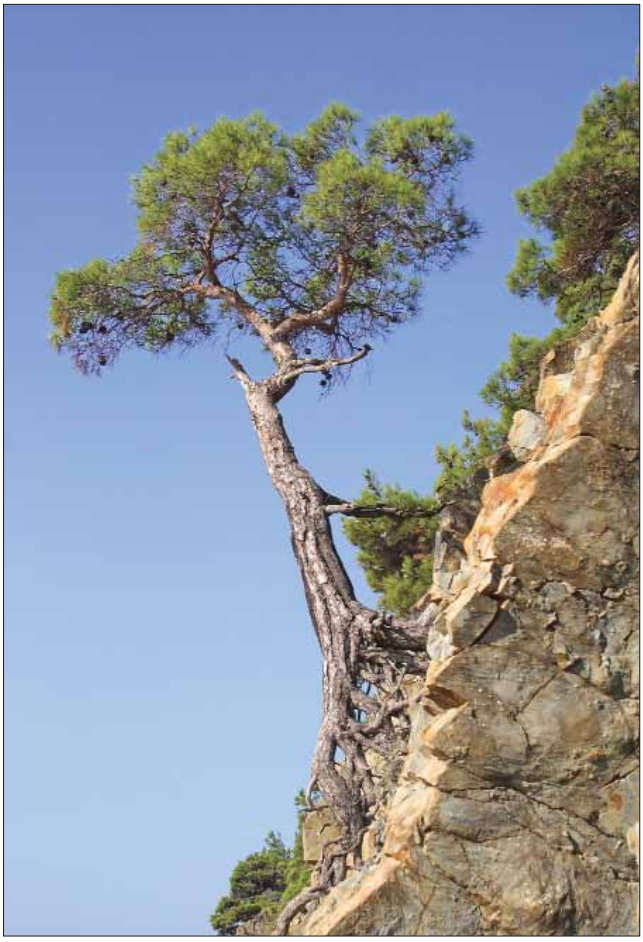
It is our hope that following the example of Jesus, we can be a church of compassion and hope, the foundation of love and joy. A

Read an interview with Virginia M. Lucey at **www.americamagazine.org**.

Like a Cedar of Lebanon

Meeting the monk within

BY MICHAEL G. RIZK



ELIAS'S ROOM CONTAINS not much more than old prayer books with frayed pages, statues, bread wrappers and a hat—remnants of his simple life here. I'm sitting at Brother Elias's desk in his damp, abandoned hermitage. It's a 15-minute walk through the woods to the monastery where he lived as a Trappist monk for 16 years. Elias was given permission to move here, where he lived as a hermit for the next 15 years until his death in 1985. I prayed upon my arrival, read some, and with the wind blowing gently, dozed a few minutes on the floor. A summer breeze cools me from the warm noonday sun.

This hermitage is where my spiritual journey began. In the summer of 1973, I had just been made promotion director for United Artists Records and was living life in the fast lane of rock 'n' roll. Music, drugs and free love were everywhere. I stopped going to church and was running spiritually on empty. I felt independent, important and successful, yet inwardly aching.

One day, after working a late evening rock concert the day before, it occurred to me that the monk in my family was only an hour's drive away. I took out a map and headed south, the radio blasting. Pulling off the exit toward the monastery, I suddenly turned off the radio and absorbed the silence—as I do now in this abandoned hermitage.

Just who was this monk? Born in 1922 to Lebanese immigrants, George Morad grew up on the west side of Cleveland and attended St. Elias Church. In his large family, George was the most popular of all the cousins. After finishing high school he held many different jobs, including a stint as an amateur prizefighter. Well respected and known to be a gentleman, he was also a very worldly man about town. If there was a party, George would be at the center of it, drinking the whiskey he could consume in huge quantities and charming the women who gravitated toward his warm personality.

When World War II erupted, George became a marine. Though his cousin, my uncle, lost a leg to shrapnel, George returned from the war unscathed, ready to resume his life of whiskey and women. George and his cousin were swimming at the Y.M.C.A., when George, complaining of chest pain, was rushed to the V.A. hospital. The doctors didn't expect him to survive his heart attack, so a priest was called to give George the last rites. He was 29 years old.

Years later, George told me that the priest would not give him absolution because he was not truly sorry for his sins. That's when George received his wake-up call from God. Though not fully recovered, he was released from the hospital. Armed with heart pills and a newfound fear of the Lord, he promptly broke off his engagement with a woman, left his job and family and traveled to Lebanon. For six months he traversed the country on foot, visiting the villages outside Beirut, where his parents were born. He returned from this odyssey to Cleveland and, telling no one but his priest and his mother, boarded a bus early one morning for the Abbey of the Genesee in western New York State.

At the monastery George immersed himself in the simple, austere life of a novice monk. While he worked as a cook and a carpenter and prayed regularly, his soul was reborn and his spirit renewed. His heart was strengthened. George threw away the pills and grew in the knowledge of God. He also took the religious name of Elias, the fiery prophet in the Old Testament. For many years only his mother came to see him. The rest of the family felt he had abandoned them. As the years passed, however, more and more people from Cleveland joined his mother in her yearly three-day visit. George had

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/CHERNYANSKIY ALEXANDROVICH

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shown by his perseverance that he was serious about this monk business.

I pulled into the abbey drive, parked the car and walked slowly up to the reception area, where a man in black-and-white robes greeted me. When I asked where I could find Brother Elias, he promptly told me that he was a hermit and was allowed no visitors. But I explained that I hadn't seen George since I was six years old and that my father and he were cousins. I had driven here out of my way and might not have this time again. That was enough for this monk, who motioned me closer and whispered to me while looking over his shoulder. "Don't tell the abbot I told you, but go up this dirt road to a path that will lead you into the woods; at the crest of the hill turn right; when you see a green bench keep walking till you see a small hermitage; there you'll find Brother Elias." I smiled and chuckled to myself as I slowly proceeded up the road, "Don't tell the abbot...." I wouldn't know one if I saw one.

My mind started to race as I proceeded deeper into the woods. What should I say? How should I act? What am I doing in these woods? Then I grew quiet. At a distance there appeared what seemed to be a hut set back on a hilltop. I slowed down, taking it all in. But everywhere I turned, no monk.

I began rustling the leaves, making noise just in case he was around. I did not want to startle a hermit. I finally made it to the crest of the hill, my heart pumping faster, and walked around behind the dwelling. I stopped short; 12 feet ahead I saw the back of a man in long black-and-white robes. The sun reflected off his shaved head. He stood erect with his arms and hands apparently moving. I assumed he was praying.

The image of a monk in continual prayer—was I hallucinating? I stood and stared, frozen in my tracks for what seemed an eternity. Finally, he turned and spat. So much for visions. He had been eating an orange! Our eyes locked in silence. I spoke, introducing myself, and saying my father's name. When his bearded face broke into a wide grin, he called my name, "Michael, Michael," as he came toward me, arms outstretched for a magnificent bear hug.

He said we must say a prayer so that the Holy Spirit would join us in this reunion feast. I had never prayed spontaneously with another person; my prayer had always been ritualized with formulas and books. But this was as natural as talking.

I found Elias, at 50 years of age, to be the happiest of men, his face radiating youth and timelessness. Compared with all the rock stars I had been around, Elias, with his great black forest of a beard, shaved head, flowing robes and sparkling eyes, was authentic, the real thing! I was struck. Many of the people I had been working with appeared to be happy and full of joy, but most of the time that energy was drug-induced. By contrast, this monk's joy came from a place deep within. It was contagious.

Brother Elias showed me his home. I followed him down a short path filled with the summer's wildflowers and came to a small front porch with a chair and table with books and a writing pad on it. He opened a screen door, and I entered one large room partitioned into three sections. His prayer room had a small altar with a crucifix and icons on either side of the Blessed Mother and Jesus. He showed me his sleeping room. Because of his back trouble, the abbot had supplied him with a small mattress to soften the flat board on which he had grown accustomed to sleeping. There was a statue of the Virgin above a mat he used for yoga and exercise. His garden produced vegetables; his water came from the rain gathered into a barrel from the roof. His toilet was a pit outside.

We sat and talked. His warmth and receptivity made me feel safe. I opened my heart and shared with him my love of music and the spirit of freedom it now gave me. In conversing with this heart-centered monk, I found myself speaking and retelling my story from a new perspective, an honesty about my life that had been missing. I felt good. When I told him about the Beatles and their effect on my generation, a quizzical look came upon his face. He was unaware of them. I explained that these four young men from Liverpool, England, were even bigger than Elvis. He stopped me—Elvis? Wondering how far back I had to go, I mentioned the sensation Frank Sinatra had caused in the '40s. That struck a chord and Elias understood my idol worship.

Then it was time for lunch: tomatoes, carrots and cucumbers from Elias's gar-

den, with bread, cheese and a tasty peach for dessert. I had not realized how famished I was. After a lifetime of striving to have more, how satisfied I was now with less.

After lunch, we walked. Elias paused many times to praise God and his abundant creation. He invited me to stay at the guesthouse. I told him with regret that I could not. Something deep inside me knew I would be coming back here. Soon it was time to leave. The spirit of hospitality and welcoming that Elias had shared enveloped me, and I knew I had found something new and deep within myself that I didn't have to let go of ever again.

As I sit now in Elias's hermitage, this memory has become my strength. Silence and quiet times in prayer help me to stop talking and start listening to God instead.

During my last visit with Elias, he told me that he, a man who had turned away from the world to be with God alone, living a good and simple life, was now facing death. He was suffering from lung cancer. As my tears welled up, I tried to be light, saying that since he would soon be in the cemetery I would not have to come back to the monastery to visit him. He smiled, but pierced me with his eyes, "You've not been coming here to visit me; you know why you come to the monastery."

I have concluded that a potential monk lives inside each of us, inspiring and listening and praying with us to God. Brother Elias, a hermit of the Genesee, enlightened me to the monk within, and I encountered the deepest part of myself—the self that wants to love unconditionally, the self that wants to forgive and show compassion to all people, the self that is aware that every person is a mysterious part of God, that we all form the mystical body of Christ. To meet that self, one inevitably must meet many false selves; like an onion, the person we think we are now will be peeled away, sometimes with tears of pain and other times with tears of joy.

If silence and solitude take you deeper into yourself, if a monastery is the place that will allow this…then go…do it. But if you cannot get to a monastery, then "go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. And your Father who sees what you do in private, will reward you…" (Mt 6:6). A

My Confirmation Blunder

A look back at a special day

BY REYNOLD JOSEPH PAUL JUNKER

ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

IT WAS NOT UNTIL I WAS confirmed, at about age 10, that I got a chance to pick a name for myself—a second name, but still a name that, unlike my baptismal name, was my choice.

Confirmation was another one of those "When I call your name, march quietly up to the front of the classroom" types of ceremonies that the Catholic Church seems to love so much, except that in this case it was not just the front of a classroom that you would be marching up to, but rather the front of an entire church. And the person at the front of that church was not just Sister Philomena, handing out holy pictures of favorite saints, but the bishop in charge of the entire Diocese of Brooklyn, sitting on a throne in front of an altar waiting to "test" your Catholicism before God and everybody else.

A Catholic, Indeed!

The purpose of confirmation was that the bishop would "confirm" you in your faith as a soldier of the church. That meant, as best I can recall the explanation given us at the time, that if somebody decided he wanted to kill or torture you because you were a Catholic, you could not deny it just to get out of being killed or tortured. Denial meant condemnation to the eternal fires of hell, which, in the eyes of the church anyway, was a lot worse than the temporary inconvenience of being killed or tortured. You had, in fact, to "confirm" the fact that you were Catholic. That was it: "I am indeed a Catholic." You had to be proud and happy to be chosen for martyrdom in this life. Those were optional words, "I am proud and happy to be chosen for martyrdom in this life," that you could add after "I am indeed a Catholic." You needn't worry—the person doing the martyring would get his comeuppance in the next life.

The confirmation ceremony, as Sister Philomena explained it, was simple. It would consist of her calling your name and your "marching quietly" to the altar at the front of the church, where the bishop would be waiting. He would first offer you his left hand and his ring for you to kiss. Then he might ask you your name, a few questions about yourself, the life of the saint whose name you were taking and what you had learned about your faith and the church while preparing for your confirmation. He would then cross your forehead with his thumb dipped in holy oil and "tap" you lightly on the cheek with his right hand. You would then "march quietly" back to your place, and that would be that.

That would be that, according to one of the older kids, John Doyle, unless the bishop's right arm got tired and he decided to use his left hand, the one with the ring, to "tap" you. That could very well happen, John Doyle explained further, because the bishop was an old guy and old guys get tired very easily. John Doyle also advised me that I should go home and wash off all of that oil right away, because by the time they got to me it would probably be "full of germs."

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The Drill

In preparing for confirmation, Sister Philomena drilled us for weeks on the kinds of questions we might expect the bishop to ask. We also had to research the life of the saint whose name we had chosen. The choice of names was restricted to those of duly authorized saints. I chose the duly authorized Paul.

On the morning of our confirmation, Sister Philomena assembled us in the church basement for one last drill. She peppered us with questions that the bishop would be likely to ask. Before marching us upstairs, she reminded us, one last time, to remember to address the bishop as "Excellency." The only time that I had ever heard anyone addressed as "Excellency" was in a piece of dialogue in Dracula movies:

"Renfield, bring me the girl."

"Yes, Excellency."

"Renfield, draw the drapes. It's getting light in here."

"Yes, Master."

Sister Didn't Laugh

After Sister Philomena had settled us into our places in the pews directly in front of the altar, it was not long before my name was called. I rose and marched to the front and knelt before the bishop. I could see Sister Philomena off to his left. The bishop offered me his ring and I kissed it. There was no sign of blood. So far, so good.

"Good morning, my son," he greeted me.

"Good morning, Excellency," I answered.

"Are you ready to be confirmed into the holy Catholic Church?"

"Yes, Master," I blurted.

"Master?"

"Excellency," I corrected, glancing off at Sister Philomena. She did not look happy. Her eyes widened so that her eyebrows disappeared up under the starched whiteness of her wimple.

"What saint's name have you chosen as your confirmation name?

"Paul, Excellency," I responded.

"An excellent choice. Paul was a great saint. He was one of the true fathers of the church. What do you know about Paul? How did he find God?"

"He fell off his horse and found God."

"He fell off his horse?"

"I mean God pushed him. God pushed Paul off of his horse and blinded him for a while—so he couldn't get back on his horse."

"And when he did get back on his horse, what happened?"

"Then he could see clearly. He could see like into the future—and he could see God and God made him a martyr."

"How did God make him a martyr?"

"His enemies crucified him. His enemies crucified him upside down."

"And how did Saint Paul get to heaven?" he asked.

I had, I thought, been doing fine until now. Now I was stumped.

"Upside down," I tried.

"Thank you my son. You may return to your seat," he finished.

"Thank you, Master," I said.

I ACTUALLY DID NOT CHOOSE the name Paul after St. Paul. I had decided, rather, that if I could not be Reynold, I could at least be Joseph Paul—as in Joseph Paul DiMaggio. My good friend Thomas Satterlee got to be Thomas Jefferson Satterlee, but he had to get a special dispensation from the pope in Rome. A

Just a Little More Faith

Theology and theater share a stage.

BY JAMES MARTIN

IN OCTOBER 2004 I found a surprising message on my voice mail from the actor Sam Rockwell. "I'm working on a play about Judas Iscariot," he said. "Could I ask you some questions about him?" Two weeks later Stephen Adly Guirgis, the playwright, called asking for advice on "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," his new play. Directed by Philip Seymour Hoffman and produced at the Public Theater in New York City, the play put Judas on trial for the death of Jesus and drew me into a role as "theological adviser." The following excerpt from ***A Jesuit Off-Broadway*** *explores how immersion into the story of Jesus and Judas changed the spiritual lives of the cast.*

Written in the playwright's trademark streetwise style, Stephen's play had moved the actors along their individual spiritual paths, but in highly personal ways. After the run ended in April 2005, I asked the cast and creative team whether they thought about faith any differently. I had to adjust my expectations. For secretly I harbored the hope that spending time with the Gospel stories would help the actors become more spiritual, more religious and, in some cases, more Christian. After all, for the past six months they had immersed themselves in roles like Jesus of Nazareth, Judas Iscariot, Mary Magdalene and St. Peter.

But the play's effect was subtler than that, and I was reminded (once again) that people's spiritual lives are too complex to be gauged as if they were gas tanks set to either full or empty.

As a boy, Philip Seymour Hoffman had been powerfully drawn to the Christian faith when he began accompanying his sister to meetings of her evangelical youth group. Early in rehearsals, he described his image of Jesus as someone who would "cause havoc," if he were around today. And he was blunt about what he was hoping to accomplish as a director. "I wanted people to see Christ the way I saw him," said Phil. "I wanted them to see a Christ who fought for people with desperate conviction. And I wanted him to be real and tough and exciting!"

Acting Like Saints

Many in the cast, however, were still forming their ideas of Christ, Christianity and Christian heroes. Liza Colón-Zayas, for example, found her role as Mother Teresa a challenge, particularly since she describes herself as "pro-choice." In the play, the beatified nun is called upon to speak on the subject of despair, central for a play about Judas.

"I went into the role thinking that Mother Teresa was like this pure spirit or something," said Liza one night over dinner. "But I learned from my reading and our discussions that she was human, and while she had these opinions that I strongly disagreed with, I could really respect her for her work with the poor. Look, if I cared for thousands and thousands of dying people, I should be able to say what I want about anything!"

While still a teenager in the Bronx, Liza had joined a fundamentalist Christian cult called the Church of Bible Understanding, before leaving it a year later. "Stephen's play helped me to see that it's okay to question things. Everything used to seem so conditional

PHOTO © CAROL ROSEGG

Jesus (John Ortiz, right) confronts Judas (Sam Rockwell, center) as another character (Kohl Sudduth) listens in Public Theater's 2005 production of "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot."

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when it came to God's love, but now I think that with God things are unconditional. Like, when I was in that cult, I used to think of Jesus as like a parole officer!"

I laughed when I heard her analogy. I had never heard it put that way. "No, really!" she said, laughing. "Now I know that you can be a [screw-up] and Jesus will still be there for you. And I don't really fear death anymore, like I used to. Now I think it'll all be good."

For Elizabeth Rodriguez, who played St. Monica, the fourth-century saint whose persistent prayers were credited with the conversion of her son, St. Augustine, the experience helped her understand the saints. "I never thought of the saints as human," she said. "They were, you know, saintly," adding that there seemed a huge distance between their lives and hers. "But reading about St. Monica gave me an insight into the mothering part of her. You know, I'm not a mother, but when I talk to my girlfriends they tell me that they would do *anything* for their kids. Monica felt that way about her son."

The idea of the saints—and, by extension, God—going to any lengths to reach human beings has a long provenance in Christian theology. The pursuing God is at the heart of many of Jesus' parables, including the lost coin and the good shepherd. Francis Thompson's 19th-century poem "The Hound of Heaven" describes a God who pursues us even as we flee.

The actress's insight about a mother and her children has even more specific antecedents. In her book *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., points to multiple images of God as mother in both the Old and the New Testaments. "Can a woman forget her nursing child?" asks the prophet Isaiah. It is a powerful image of the all-embracing love of the mother who will stop at nothing to save her children.

"Monica felt that way about anyone who was treated unjustly," said Elizabeth Rodriguez.

Playing Jesus

Of course, I was curious about how playing Jesus of Nazareth would affect an actor like John Ortiz, who was also one of the founders of the LAByrinth Theater Company, which had co-produced the play. During the rehearsals John had

struggled with finding the right balance between the humanity and divinity of his character. "Playing Jesus helped me to see what it was like to love someone unconditionally, to love someone as they are," said John. "It also helped me to see how God loves us."

"During the run I started to feel like my life was beginning to get a little better, too," he continued. "I was seeing that in relationships, and with myself, and with my career, too. Big changes were starting to happen: I bought a house and accepted a role in a big film. The amazing thing was that I wasn't freaking out at all—and this would have been a good occasion for freaking out! I felt like things were happening for a reason. And I think it's because I'm more aware of all this stuff. My relationship to God and to Jesus has grown significantly, and it's based more on communication, and it's more open now, and it's great to be aware of that. I feel like everything is going to be okay now."

John's reflections reminded me of the quote from the 13th-century mystic Blessed Julian of Norwich, the cloistered English nun who experienced revelations, or, in her words, "shewings," from Jesus. In one vision Jesus tells her, "All will be well, all will be well, and all manner of things will be well."

"Yeah," said John. "It's just like that."

Walking Through the Door

For Yul Vázquez, who played the prosecuting attorney in the trial of Judas, the play represented a "demystification" of the Gospels. "I've always thought that Jesus was God, but I never really had it explained to me."

The theme of despair made a deep impression on Yul. Toward the end of the play, Jesus offers Judas forgiveness, but Judas's despair prevents him from accepting it. "I've had these moments in life where I would wonder what I was doing with my life," said Yul. "Once, when I was playing guitar [in a band], I developed this awful tendonitis, and I thought: if I can't play again, if my career ends, what will I do? But you just have to continue. When Judas despairs and Jesus tries to help him, you can see that it's just Judas getting in his own way. Jesus wants to help him, but Judas was a victim of his own ego."

Not surprisingly, the playwright's perspective on the spiritual life altered during the long process of creating the play. "For one thing, I pray more now," said Stephen Adly Guirgis, who has tackled religious themes in many of his previous plays. "And I pray more for a willingness to be open. Before I used to pray for results."

When I asked if he felt differently about his Catholic faith, from which he had sometimes felt estranged, he offered a story that reached back into his childhood. In the sixth grade he was taught by a beloved nun, who used to read a chapter of *The Chronicles of Narnia* to Stephen's class each day as a treat. C. S. Lewis's tale is both a children's adventure story and an allegory of Christian themes. "The sister would read it to the class and explain the imagery to us," said Stephen. At the end of the series, the powerful Christ-like figure of Aslan the lion confronts his vanquished enemy.

"There was this evil prince," said Stephen, "who all the while had been fighting against Aslan and against the good guys. But when he was finally judged by Aslan, [the prince] was not condemned. And all of Aslan's followers were pretty upset. But Aslan said that though the evil prince was misguided, he was true to his motives."

Stephen remembered the time as one when he was struggling with his faith and struggling with the notion of how an all-forgiving God could condemn Judas. "C. S. Lewis's story taught me that maybe things were more like I think that they are, that God was merciful to everyone, even sinners. I felt like the story had opened a door for me when I was a child. But I didn't want to walk through it. There was still so much fear."

"With the play," he said, "I feel like I'm starting to walk through the door."

Talking With Judas

Sam Rockwell, who had played Judas Iscariot, fell silent when I asked about his faith after the play ended. One of the very first things he had told me about during our initial meeting was his lack of any formal religious training. "I wasn't raised religious and I don't know anything about religion," he said in 2004.

"I still don't know if I believe everything," said Sam tentatively. "But the play did inform my faith, and I think about Jesus in a different way. I think the message of Jesus is about love and forgiveness, and I feel closer to that; I also feel like I know how to talk about it."

Then Sam warmed to the topic. "There's an important message in all those stories we talked about, and his message is still relevant, and it's still a challenge to the world. Jesus still challenges people. You know, like no one's better than anyone else, and let the one without sin cast the first stone." He paused again. "But, you know, organized religion can be such a nightmare sometimes. Like, what does homophobia have to do with God? What does God have to do with any of that?"

The whole experience of the play was, Sam said, a "religious" one. He laughed as he ticked off some of the more bizarre happenings around the set—like a strange power outage that happened on Easter Sunday. "There was always something, I don't know, lurking around that play."

"I guess I know more about Jesus and his message," said Sam, by way of summing up. "But I just hope I don't fake it, or take it for granted now, because during these last few months there was this feeling in me, this feeling that I had just a little more faith." A

Burgeoning Global Threat

The Atomic Bazaar

The Rise of the Nuclear Poor

By William Langewiesche

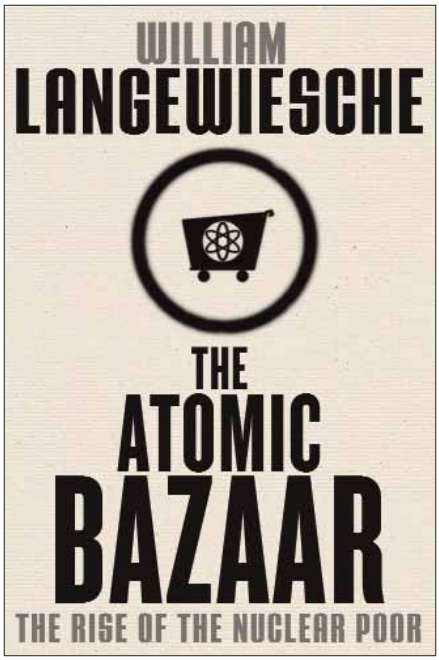
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 192p $22
ISBN 0374106789

This book has convinced me that just about any country on earth can have nuclear weapons if it wants them. My conclusion from reading *The Atomic Bazaar* is that it is still possible to stop or impede any particular program, but the general process of nuclear proliferation is now so advanced that it is virtually certain that a great many underdeveloped countries will eventually build their own atomic bombs.

The author, William Langewiesche, believes that nuclear weapons are now an achievable ambition for most of the world's states. He reached that conclusion after researching and reporting nuclear proliferation stories for The Atlantic Monthly and Vanity Fair for many years. In the course of that work he met and interviewed engineers, government officials and other journalists who specialized in that field across the world. The evidence of his eyes and ears and the words of potential and actual participants in the "atomic bazaar" drove his conclusions.

Langewiesche, whose previous books include *The Outlaw Sea*, argues that it is unlikely that entire, functioning nuclear weapons will be sold to developing countries by those who possess them. He believes, correctly I think, that the nuclear powers have instituted sufficiently stringent controls on such weapons to prevent theft and sale.

He also believes that it is probable that a "poor" country seeking to construct its own nuclear weapons is likely to opt for building "gun type" weapons in which the fissile core would be made of enriched uranium (H.E.U.). Another possibility would be to attempt to build bombs in which the fissile core is made of plutonium. North Korea followed the plutonium pathway toward nuclearization, but the relatively small amount of plutonium available has been a severely limiting factor in its program. The general opinion in the community of experts watching North Korea's efforts has been that North Korea must have also been pursuing an H.E.U.-based program if its nuclear ambitions were ever more than a negotiating tactic.



Langewiesche finds that the reasons for opting for H.E.U. bombs are quite simple: 1) Weapons built of plutonium are of necessity much more complicated in design and fabrication; and 2) there is a great deal more H.E.U. in the world than there is plutonium, and a lot of it is poorly safeguarded. (There are something close to 20,000 metric tons of H.E.U. in existence at the present.) Much of this material is located in the countries of the former Soviet Union in a wide variety of facilities in many of the former "closed cities." Laboratories, industrial sites, medical plants and storage sites possessing H.E.U. are scattered across the Eurasian landmass by the thousands. In many of these places the custodians are members of the former Soviet academic and managerial elite whose standard of living has been severely stressed by the lengthy transition to a market economy. Langewiesche observes that in many places possessing H.E.U. there are no longer explicable sources of the funds which continue to support standards of living far above the populations of the surrounding region. These are often the same places with the lowest standards of government safeguarding.

The author cites several specific examples of the creation of nuclear bomb programs by relatively poor countries. He discusses the Pakistan case in the greatest detail. He describes the easy availability of technical education in Europe and the United States, which produced such capable men as the scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan and his associates. He also describes their practical workplace experience in such places as the Netherlands. Then he gives an account of the sense of grievance against the "developed world," which caused Pakistan to seek atomic weapons, and the huge "slice" of available funding that successive governments devoted to this program. Langewiesche also makes it quite clear that for Pakistan (and probably for India as well) nuclear weapons are not thought of as merely a deterrent. They are thought of as the ultimate battlefield killer. From his chronology we can see that Pakistan has probably been on the brink of nuclear weapons deployment against India several times.

The manufacturing and research facilities for making the kind of bombs discussed here are not very advanced. The plans for such "gun type" bombs are widely accessible on the Internet. The possession of such weapons holds an almost mystical significance for small countries. The ownership alone would make them major "players" in their own minds. Saddam

The Reviewers

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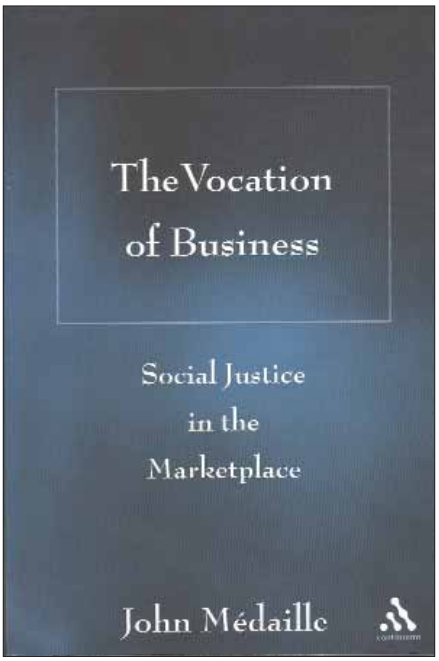
Hussein would have had a fission weapon in the early 1990s if he had not ruined his prospects by invading Kuwait.

The present nuclear powers have learned to live with the possession of such weapons. The new owners will not have been through the sobering experiences of the cold war.

Someone should get busy explaining to them why these weapons have not been used since Nagasaki.

Patrick Lang



Go Back to the Common Good

The Vocation of Business

Social Justice in the Marketplace

By John Médaille

Continuum. 364p $34.95 (paperback)

ISBN 0826428088

In many ways the subtitle captures the expansive scope of this highly original, intriguing and challenging book much better than the more pedestrian sounding, "the vocation of business." John Médaille, a real-estate broker who also teaches at the University of Dallas, deftly employs Catholic social teaching on the economy

but insists that a teaching that cannot be enacted in the daily life and mundane concerns of our world ceases really to be a teaching and becomes a mere set of platitudes. As he puts it: "If justice really does have some meaning beyond abstractions and platitudes, then it must be capable of being embodied in real economic institutions, including the institutions of business, without conflicting with the inherent nature of those institutions." He sets himself the task to show how a "just" economy could also be a flourishing, productive one.

Médaille knows a mere vision of justice does not necessarily result in just institutions. He claims that Catholic social teaching on economics needs to be closely correlated with the complexities of economic laws. There is, to be sure, no one Catholic economics as such, only an orienting ethical vision for the economic order. The author summarizes his goal in the frontispiece, citing a saying of then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: "A morality that believes itself able to dispense with the technical knowledge of economic laws is not morality but moralism. As such, it is the antithesis of morality."

In a sophisticated and learned excursus, *The Vocation of Business* parses the regnant economic models and their assumptions and shows that the ideal of a completely value-free economics shorn of any nexus to ethics is a chimera. Along the way, Médaille treats the utilitarianism of Bentham, the free market theory of Adam Smith, the contributions of John Maynard Keynes and the neo-liberal Chicago school of Milton Friedman. He points out the strengths and weaknesses of three competing business models: the shareholder model; the stakeholder model; the common good model. Médaille strongly opts for the third model but ably demonstrates his claim that "every economic system, including our own, has embodied some notion of justice."

In a chapter on economic history, Médaille explicates how, over time, any notions of distributive justice and the common good have fallen out of the regnant economic models. Part II of the book takes us through the social encyclicals and claims that Catholic social teaching stands or falls on the validity of some variant of the just wage. The central question for economic systems and thought remains: Is labor just another commodity in the process of production? Is the worker just another thing? Médaille demonstrates empirically the important contribution of "human capital" (labor) to economic productivity.

While the notion of the just wage may seem quaint to many secular economists, Médaille proposes a definition: economics is about social provisioning, or how societies provide for their material reproduction. Hence, three central questions get pressed: What to produce? How to produce it? Who should benefit?

This book is so rich and wide-ranging that any brief synopsis easily dilutes its strengths. Though treatment of certain issues—e.g., marginal productivity, externalities, the law of rents, Gini coefficients and economic equilibrium—is technical, most are explained in terms a lay person can follow.

In one chapter, Médaille takes on

Michael Novak's *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* and critiques its dualistic understanding of natural law, which allows an autonomous economics cut loose from explicit ethics. He accuses Novak of reducing social justice to formal liberty and tellingly questions the sequestration of economics from direct interaction with the political and cultural orders. Médaille then turns his scrutiny to the Austrian school of economics and argues that its view of economics is incompatible with a Christian vision of human dignity, the common good and a priority option for the poor.

A final section, "The Practice of Justice in the Modern Business World," includes chapters that treat of the Grameen Bank, the Catholic workers' cooperative movement in Spain and the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation. Other chapters address globalization and the issues of marginalization of underdeveloped areas and the rich potentialities ingredient in the notion of an ownership society. The gist of Médaille's argument is that there can be no self-correcting market equilibrium in the economy without a prior equity based on a living wage. So, much depends on a re-vindication of a proper notion of distributive justice when thinking about the economy, some variant of a "just" or living wage and a widely dispersed ownership of the means of production.

G. K. Chesterton's aphorism is evoked to show the connection between equilibrium and equity: "You cannot pay a man like a pauper and expect him to spend like a prince." As Médaille sees it, the real debate should be between concentrated ownership (whether in the hands of the state or corporate bureaucrats) and distributed ownership. As Catholic social teaching insists, too many inequalities in a society threaten democratic freedoms and the common good. Something is amiss when the freedom of the few so impinges on the options for the freedom of the many.

Some elements of Médaille's argument are bound to be controversial, e.g., a proposal for a time-bound ownership in stocks and a plea to limit the scope of business in the political order. The author wants us to entertain something richer than a mere notion of negative economic freedom and to distinguish between a so-called free market and "an economy in the service of freedom." *The Vocation of Business* offers a feast to chew on.

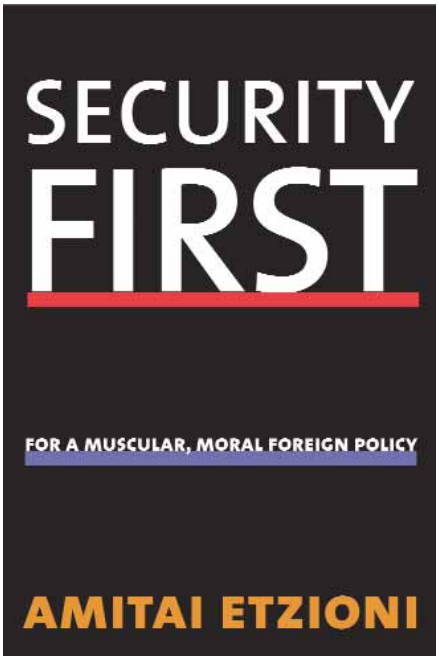
John A. Coleman

Our Highest Priority

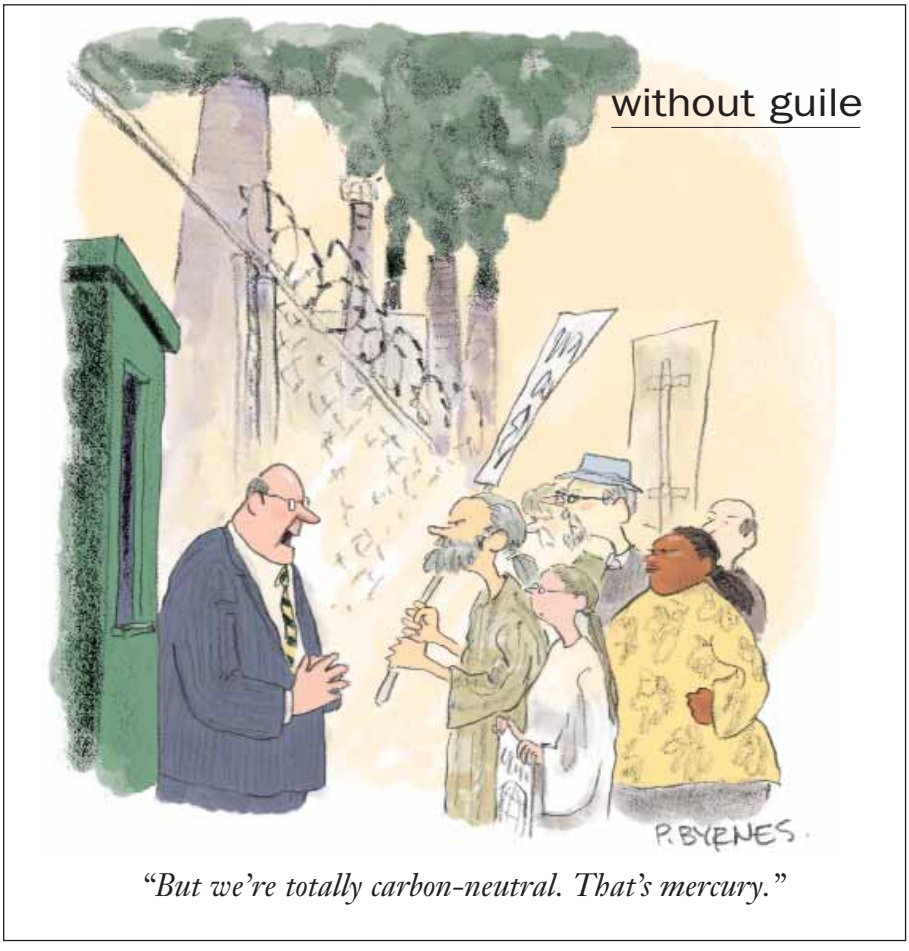
Security First

For a Muscular, Moral Foreign Policy

By Amitai Etzioni
Yale Univ. Press. 336p $27
ISBN 0300108575



In an essay in Foreign Affairs, January/February 2007, Tony Blair argued, not unpersuasively, that in the war against global extremism "[w]e chose values [instead of] security as our battleground." By "values" he meant democratic values. "[W]henever countries are in the process of democratic development," he wrote, "we must extend a helping hand" and "ensure that [our] agenda is not limited to security alone." The answer to terrorism, he concluded, echoing a long-held official American stand, is an aggressive



"But we're totally carbon-neutral. That's mercury."

CARTOON BY PAT BYRNES

foreign policy in defense of democracy and fundamental human rights.

Amitai Etzioni, Director of George Washington University's Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies, is in fundamental disagreement with this policy. *Security First* pleads for a major change in American foreign policy, one that places security well ahead of democratization. The author laments an American policy of removing, threatening or undermining established governments in the interest of fostering or installing democracy. Military intervention in particular, he argues, unleashes extremism and mayhem, especially in societies pockmarked by ethnic and religious hatred. His prime examples are Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Piercing national borders to dislodge dictators or kill lethal non-state actors, and causing collateral damage among the locals, serves only to quicken the bitterness that provides the breeding ground of international terrorism.

Etzioni advocates primacy of the "life-based foreign policy," one that chiefly advances physical and economic security. For him, the greatest threat to domestic and international security is nuclear proliferation. He faults American foreign policy for giving more attention to democratization than non-proliferation, an emphasis that Russia and North Korea in particular have seen as a threat to their internal political orders, causing both countries, as with Iran, to develop, renew or accelerate their nuclear capabilities, with the ever-present danger that nuclear weapons may fall into the hands of terrorists or other non-state actors. The deal the United States made with Libya is the author's model of a primacy-of-life policy. A dictatorship that once sponsored terrorism ceased doing so after we promised to leave its regime intact. The result: we gained an ally in the campaign to curtail the spread of weapons of mass destruction. In short, we properly placed a higher value on safety than on democracy.

All this is prelude to the most interesting and provocative part of *Security First*. Etzioni deplores the "naïve idealism" that has prompted the United States to pressure peoples the world over into adopting Western, liberal, Enlightenment principles of constitutional governance, a policy he thinks has invited more contempt and opposition than respect. He rejects the popular thesis that we are at war with Islamic civilization. Rather, we should form alliances with Islamic and other countries from which we can expect cooperation and support in combating terrorism and reducing the threat of nuclear weapons. Whether these regimes are democratic or authoritarian should make no difference. Extremism and terrorism need to be stopped, for it is only in security that the world will be made safe for the development of democracy. Similarly, he believes human rights cannot be advanced in the absence of security.

Security First seeks to show that since 9/11 the U.S. government and certain public intellectuals (neo-cons?) have "*grossly exaggerated the size of our opposition and mischaracterized its nature, and...have come to view many potential allies as enemies*" (author's italics). In the Islamic world in particular, terrorists or "warriors," as Etzioni dubs them, make up a tiny minority of the population. But the vast majority he calls "preachers," whom he describes as "illiberal moderates." The term "illiberal" is not used pejoratively. Although the "moderates" reject liberal democracy as

Americans know it, they live by the word and are open to persuasion. They are people of faith, they prize stability over disorder, and they oppose all forms of violence. We learn that the great divide in the war against terrorism is not between civilizations or between liberals and fundamentalists. Rather, the "true fault-line" in today's world runs *through* civilizations, secular or religious; and the author's overview of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, socialism and our own civil rights movement shows that they have all given rise to a warrior class.

Accordingly, America's major foreign policy error has been its failure to form alliances and make common cause with the "illiberals," especially in the Islamic world, for these good people should be regarded as natural allies in the fight against terrorism. Our opposition to illiberal democracy, he suggests, is motivated by contemporary liberals "suspicious of all religions," even of strong secular beliefs, one reason American policy-makers have preferred to cast their lot with the small minority of Western-style liberals in the countries under siege. Their "naïve idealism," in Etzioni's view, would undermine the moral foundation of Islamic societies, only to be replaced by an ideology that would strip them of their stabilizing cultures and identities. A "muscular, moral foreign policy"—one emphasizing the primacy of life—would, the author concludes, support cultures and identities opposed to terrorism and other evil forces around the world.

Security First is a little more nuanced than suggested in this review, for Etzioni accepts the just war principles that might warrant military intervention in cases of large scale ethnic cleansing or other genocidal actions. But what about situations where Tony Blair's "values first" policy cannot so easily be dismissed? Recently, the Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo pleaded with Britain to invade Zimbabwe and remove the dictator, Robert Mugabe, who is leading his people into the abyss of starvation and depredation. But here—as in Darfur—the United States and United Nations have exhibited a shameful timidity. Zimbabwe may be the best example of a place where a "values first" policy is more likely to safeguard human rights and democracy than to threaten insecurity.

Donald P. Kommers

Poem

The Boat House

(after reading a biography of Dylan Thomas)

Before the ten o'clock bar call;
before the bitter pints
lined up like lost years
along the knotted tabletop;
before the fist-thumping
and the story-telling
and the long ropes of snot
he wiped along one grimy thumb
like an aside;
there was the one beneficent hour
in the boathouse at Laugharne;
the two lines of "Milk Wood"
he would exhume each day
from the great white drifts
of foolscap curling beneath his shoes;
two lines a day,
two lines of shook foil
before the Guinness and the lust
turned lucidity into oblivion
and old Dylan tipped his ragged cap
to the darkness
that settled plumply around him
like a mistress. Two lines
are all he exacted from his brilliance;
twin victories that washed against
his querulous mind, soft as water,
tender as the waves that broke each morning
against the boat house door.

Katherine Kavanaugh Doud

KATHERINE KAVANAUGH DOUD is a journalist based in Kalamazoo, Mich. Her feature writing has been honored by the Michigan Press Association and the National Newspaper Association. This poem is one of three runners-up in the 2007 Foley Poetry Contest.

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Letters

Happiness Is a Warm Puppy

I agree with Patricia Kossmann's Of Many Things column (10/1). When my mom and I both found ourselves widows, we moved in together and adopted a shelter dog. It was one of the best decisions we ever made. It had been half a century since we'd had a dog, but Abby, an Australian Shepherd-Golden Retriever mix, won her way into our hearts at once. I'd urge anyone thinking of either a dog or a cat to try the local animal shelters first!

Phyllis Karr
Barnes, Wis.

No More Unilateralism

Your editorial "A Diplomatic Surge" (10/8) recognizes the primary importance of national reconciliation in Iraq and calls upon our government to take up the diplomatic inititatives recommended by the Iraq Study Group. As you note, this includes an opening toward all of Iraq's neighbors as well as providing for the active good offices of the Arab League and the Islamic Conference. The difficulty with this position is that like the Study Group, it assumes that the resolution of this tragic conflict rightfully remains under the power and direction of the foreign policy of the United States—even as it calls for greater participation by other states in the overall peace process.

The real difficulty now is that the peace process is coming more under the authority of the United Nations, while we insist on remaining in charge of military operations.

As you correctly observe, we cannot remain indefinitely in Iraq, nor can we arbitrarily withdraw. Any new peacekeeping force that might help us exit with some honor would have to be approved by the Security Council, since up to now it has legitimized our occupation. We all would be better served by focusing attention upon what may or may not happen within the United Nations system rather than hoping for changes in Washington.

Cornelius F. Murphy Jr.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

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Rethinking Religious Ed

The focus of "Educating for Living Faith," by James J. DiGiacomo, S.J., (9/10), if I read him correctly, was on Catholic schools. It did not address the education of thousands of Catholic students who are taught religion in once-a-week parish religious education programs. These courses are offered mostly by lay people, who in many cases have had little professional education in theology or religious studies. At the present time, these devoted and hard-working people may be the only link these children will ever have to any formal training in their Catholic religion, so their efforts are absolutely crucial to the formation of the Catholic youth they serve.

The disparity between the amount of money and effort devoted to a typical parish grade school and that devoted to these religious ed students is, in our opinion, unjust. As an example, a parish school may have as many as 300 students enrolled in its eight elementary grades, while there may be 700 or more children taking the weekly religious ed courses. The amount of parish funds devoted to this latter group is miniscule compared with the amount spent to provide a full curriculum not only of religious courses but the whole range of elementary school subjects.

Perhaps it is time to rethink and restructure our whole approach to Catholic elementary and secondary school religious education. Maybe we need to devote diocesan and parish funds and school buildings to a new, comprehensive religious education program staffed by trained professionals, offering sound instruction for the young as well as a sophisticated curriculum for the adults in the parish. Regional centers that could serve multiple parishes and give them a first-rate program for all their parishioners might even be a more economically sound way to implement such a program. At any rate, justice demands that all of the students and adult members of a parish receive the best religious education we can give them.

Gerald and Ann Williams
Denville, N.J.

Defying Common Sense

Regarding "Vatican Clarifies Position on Artificial Nutrition" (10/1), I continue to be dismayed and disappointed by the position of the teaching church on the care of patients in a chronic vegetative state. The rather dogmatic approach would seem to defy faith, justice and common sense. I simply cannot believe that there are no Catholic ethicists whose viewpoint would be different.

Whatever happened to the words of St. Guthlac: "My spirit has run the course of the race of life and is impatient to be born to those joys whose course has no ending"? It would seem that we go to extreme and counterproductive lengths to avoid that joy.

Every factor except the emotional would seem to mitigate against long-term feeding in the vegetative state. That it somehow makes such patients "more comfortable" has yet to be demonstrated. To suggest that long-term care of such patients is not expensive and very burdensome to caretakers belies the reality. I can only ask you to walk with me down the corridors of nursing homes.

The church continues to place guilt upon those conscientious believers who believe that natural death should be just that, natural, when there is no hope of restoring true personhood.

G. A. Weigel
Somerset, Ky.

Patience in Division

Mary Ann Glendon asks in her article "Searching for Bernard Lonergan" (10/1) why his insights are not better known and better accepted.

As a student of his for many years, may I suggest that Lonergan answers this question himself with a rather terse insight: "There is bound to be a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captured by now this, now that new development.... But what will count is perhaps a less pop-

ulated center big enough to be at home in both the old and new...strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait."

This view does not sit well with the ideologies of either what he calls the solid right or the scattered left.

(Rev.) Val J. Peter
Boys Town, Neb.

Consulting Pastoral Leaders

I am grateful to **America** for publishing the very illuminating article by Msgr. John Strynkowski, "Mutually Enriching: The Work of Bishops and Theologians" (9/17).

Increasingly each time a theologian from a unique cultural experience, such as Asia or Latin America, articulates the applications of Catholic Christian teachings on Christ, salvation and church, there is that "noisy process" to which Cardinal Newman referred. Unlike theologians who, as Monsignor Strynkowski noted, are "involved in the work of the magisterium at every level of preparation and authority," pastoral leaders have yet to find their voices included in any consistent and structured manner. I do not want to presume that theologians do not consult and reflect pastoral reality, but there are too few opportunities at this time for consultation on the experience of ministry, particularly regarding gay and lesbian Catholics and their parents. Because of this, church documents at times do not reflect real lives, values and challenges.

An example of this in the U.S.C.C.B. is the contrast between the 1997 pastoral letter *Always Our Children*, addressed to parents of homosexual children—a document for which there was consultation with pastoral leaders and families—and, on the other hand, the 2006 document *Ministry to Persons With a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*, which did not involve consulting those with a long history in this ministry or those they served, and caused great distress and loss of credibility not only for gay and lesbian Catholics and their parents, but also for many priests and lay ministers around the country. The next step for that mutually enriching process needs to include a variety of pastoral leaders and those they serve.

(Rev.) Jim Schexnayder
Resource Director
National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries
Walnut Creek, Calif.

Sounds of Silence

Bishop Emil Wcela's essay on the Latin Mass, "A Dinosaur Ponders the Latin Mass" (10/8), was solid and insightful. It is useful to cut through the nostalgia and allow the memory of the ordinary Latin liturgy in the ordinary parish church of the 1950s to be accurately described, as I believe he has done.

I place Bishop Wcela's essay alongside that of Cardinal Godfried Danneels, "Liturgy 40 Years After the Council" (8/27), in which he reminds us that the sacramentary calls for periods of silence during the liturgy so that the participants have a chance to interiorize the mystery. He laments the "tyranny of words," because of which there is no time to, well, pray.

Could it be that the sense of mystery some feel they will find in the Latin Mass would be quite available in our parish (vernacular) liturgies if only we would talk less and observe the periods of silence that are called for by the rubrics?

(Msgr.) John Rowan
Sayville, N.Y.

Turning Back the Clock

My thanks to Bishop Emil Wcela for the nostalgic trip down liturgy lane in "A Dinosaur Ponders the Latin Mass" (10/8). I can identify with many of his experiences as a pre-Vatican II seminarian. I was grateful to be ordained in 1966, so my first experience of celebrating the liturgy was a combination of Latin and English.

This emerging longing for a Latin Mass seems to be a repudiation of what Vatican II called for: "The liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and elements subject to change. The latter not only may but ought to be changed with the passing of time if features have by chance crept in which are less harmonious with the intimate nature of the liturgy, or if existing elements have grown less functional."

Also, "The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation."

These norms were approved by an overwhelming majority of the council fathers, and much in the Latin Mass defies these norms.

Terry McCloskey, C.S.S.R.
Kansas City, Mo.

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

Today

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), Nov. 4, 2007

Readings: Wis 11:22–12:2; Ps 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14; 2 Thess 1:11–2:2; Lk 19:1-10

"Today salvation has come to this house" (Lk 19:9)

"TODAY" IS A RECURRENT and important word in Luke's Gospel. From Jesus' inaugural discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth to his death, resurrection and ascension, "today" marks the time of Jesus' ministry as a special time, the center between the times of Israel and of the church, a time when all the energies of the Holy Spirit are focused on Jesus. In the story of Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus the tax collector, "today" occurs twice: when Jesus tells Zacchaeus, "today I must stay at your house" and "today salvation has come to this house." Today Jesus, the incarnation of God's saving power, chooses to visit with Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus' neighbors in Jericho are not so kind. They find Jesus' behavior regarding Zacchaeus scandalous and say, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." Their problem came with Luke's description of Zacchaeus as "a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man." That description may seem innocent to us. But to people in Jesus' time it was disturbing. Tax collectors in ancient Israel collected taxes for the Roman occupiers. They bid for the contract and were entitled to keep for themselves whatever they took in above their bid. So a wealthy tax collector like Zacchaeus was suspect regarding his patriotism and his honesty. By occupation Zacchaeus might qualify as a "sinner," not the type of person with whom a pious Jewish teacher like Jesus should associate.

Was Zacchaeus a sinner in need of conversion? Or was he the victim of his neighbors' prejudices? That was the topic of an interesting debate among exegetes several years ago. The problem comes with the verbs in Lk 19:8. In Greek they are in the present tense (literally "I give…I repay"). If rendered in the present tense, they describe Zacchaeus's customary practices even before he met Jesus. In other words, he is defending himself against his neighbors' suspicions about him. If translated as futures ("I shall give…I shall repay"), they imply Zacchaeus's intention to change his sinful ways and act justly toward his neighbors. The New American Bible Revised and the New Revised Standard Version retain the traditional future tenses. And the selections from Wisdom 11–12 and Psalm 145 suggest that the framers of the Lectionary regarded Zacchaeus as a sinner in need of conversion.

In either case Zacchaeus is a very attractive character. His enthusiasm to see Jesus is such that he climbs a tree hoping to catch sight of him. Zacchaeus claims that he will be (or already is) generous to the poor and honest in his business dealings. He is proud to welcome Jesus into his home. Zacchaeus is enthusiastic, generous and hospitable—a marvelous combination of human virtues. But beyond and behind all this is Zacchaeus' realization and recognition—however intuitively or obscurely—that with the arrival of Jesus in Jericho near the end of his long journey from northern Galilee to Jerusalem, the day of salvation is present in the "today" of Jesus. It is the presence of Jesus that brings forth the responses of enthusiasm, generosity and hospitality from Zacchaeus the tax collector.

What would you do if you knew that the world was going to end tomorrow? That is always an interesting question, and the responses it elicits tell a good deal about the respondent's values and character. Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians was written in large part to dampen speculations to the effect that "the day of the Lord is at hand." Some of these speculations may have been fueled by Paul's own statements in 1 Thessalonians 4–5. It appears that some Christians were not doing their fair share within the community on the grounds that this world would soon pass away.

Paul's advice to them (and us) is to continue living a good Christian life every day. That means letting God work in our lives so that we may be worthy of our vocation as Christians. Christian freedom is not total personal autonomy ("no one is going to tell me what to do"), but rather acknowledging and serving God as the only master and lord worth serving. Besides accepting our Christian calling, we are challenged to fulfill "every good purpose and every effort of faith." Living a Christian life entails imagination and purposefulness. It means examining our consciences and striving to find ways to become better children of God, better human beings. All this is done so that "the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him." In living for the greater glory of God we let God be glorified in us, and we in turn share in the glory of God. Because we recognize that we live out of the "today" of Jesus, we can imitate Zacchaeus's good example of enthusiasm, generosity and hospitality every day that God may give us.

Daniel J. Harrington

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Praying With Scripture

- Was Zacchaeus a sinner in need of conversion or the victim of his neighbors' prejudices?
- What makes Zacchaeus an attractive character and worthy of imitation?
- What would you do if you knew that the world was going to end tomorrow?

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