America

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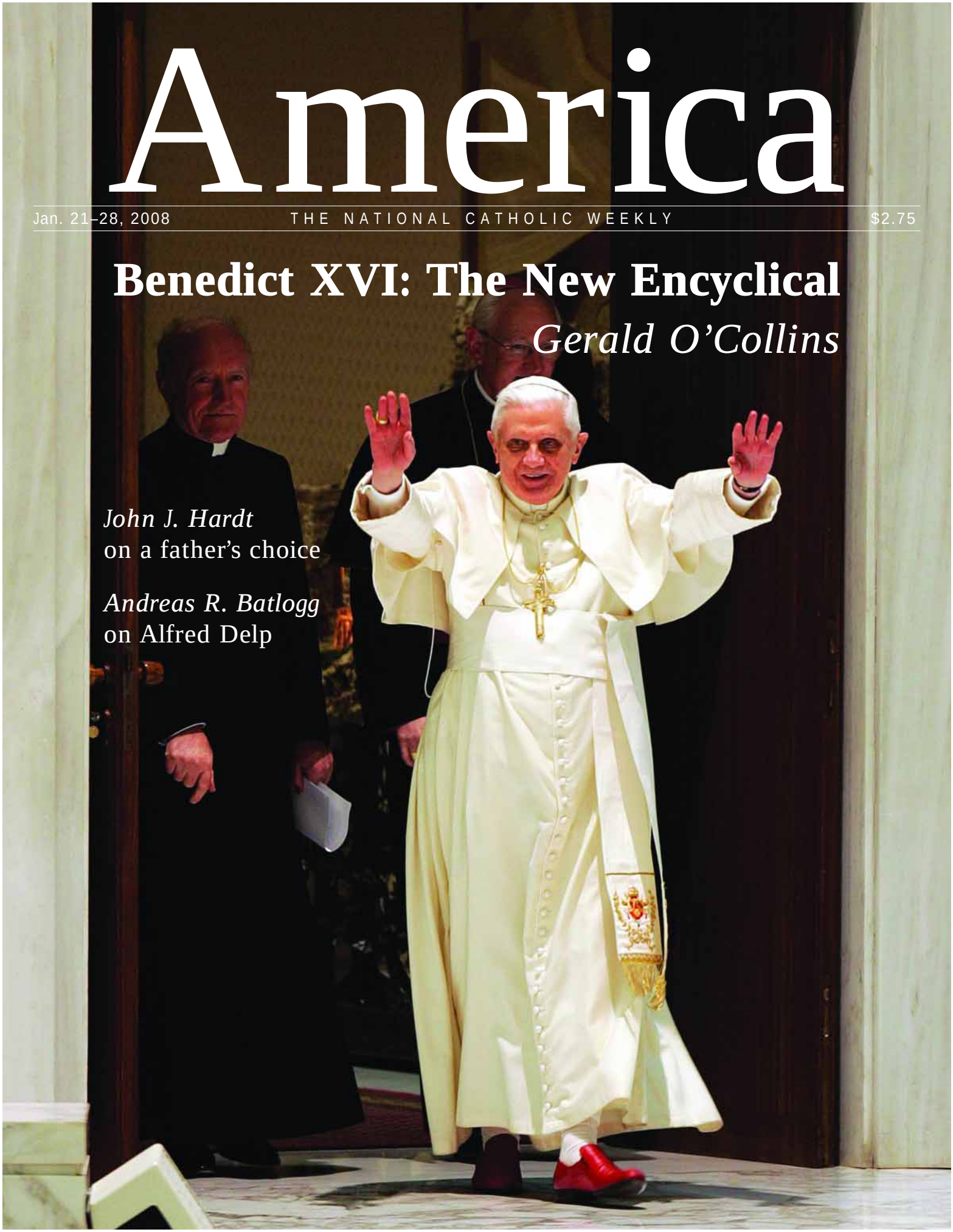
Benedict XVI: The New Encyclical

Gerald O'Collins

John J. Hardt
on a father's choice

Andreas R. Batlogg
on Alfred Delp



Of Many Things

THE CAREERS OF SCHOLARS usually last longer than those of stock car racers. Two 90-year-old Jesuits living halfway around the world from each other demonstrated this last year by publishing new books.

To be exact, the books were copyrighted in 2006 but actually appeared some months later. Since **America** is sponsored by Jesuits, it may be allowed to call attention to two items not likely to be displayed on the book racks in airports.

The publishers in these cases do not have household names. One is the Jesuit Communications Foundation in Quezon City, the Philippines, which has brought out *Unusual and Ordinary: Biographical Sketches of Some Philippine Jesuits* (249p) by Miguel A. Bernad, S.J.; and Orlando Truth Inc. of Tangerine, Fla., has published *The Miraculous Parallelisms of John* (168p), a close and sophisticated analysis by John J. Gerhard, S.J., of underlying literary patterns in the Fourth Gospel.

Father Bernad has drawn profiles of 20 deceased Jesuits who worked in the Philippines at one time or another between 1866 and 2006. Their number includes Spaniards, Americans and Filipinos. When this period began, jurisdiction over the Philippine Mission of the Society of Jesus was exercised by the Jesuit Province of Aragon, Spain. In 1927 that care was transferred to what was then known as the Maryland-New York Province. The Philippine Province was established in 1958; today it has some 330 members, of whom 29 are Americans who entered the Society of Jesus in the United States.

Father Bernad himself joined the Society in the Philippines in 1932, when he was 15 years old. He was ordained in 1946 at Woodstock College, the former Jesuit house of studies in Maryland, and in 1951 he received a Ph.D. in education from Yale University. For more than a half-century since then, he taught language and literature in three Jesuit Philippine universities and has been an editor of scholarly journals.

The essays collected here are arranged in chronological order beginning with an account of a Spaniard, Federico Faura (1840-97), a largely self-taught scientist who developed a small meteorological station in Manila into a versatile observatory that pioneered in the study of typhoons.

Miguel Bernad knew personally most of those about whom he writes; and, as he says, there are many others whose stories he might have included.

Among those remembered is an American, Carl W. J. Hausmann (1898-1945), who died in January 1945 of starvation on a Japanese prison ship, where he had heroically ministered to his fellow prisoners. The last and next to youngest of those memorialized is Teodoro Arvisu (1920-57), who served in the Philippine Army after Pearl Harbor and died far too young, humanly speaking, of a brain tumor five years after his ordination.

Father Bernad's book nourishes optimism about the human condition, because it evokes the images of good men who got things done. Father Gerhard's book is also encouraging, because the word for him is *steady*. Except for a period from 1953 to 1957 when he was a U.S. Air Force chaplain, he has been a teacher most of the time since his ordination in 1949. For some 30 of those years, he was a professor of theology at St. John's University in New York City, with furloughs for sabbaticals in biblical studies.

Some exegetes have said that first-century editors of the Fourth Gospel dislocated its original order. Father Gerhard argues, on the contrary, that a careful study of this Gospel reveals literary patterns—concepts and passages that are matched and harmonized with one another—that were imposed upon the text by an inspired writer who was its principal author.

At Father Gerhard's request, a firm of actuaries calculated the mathematical probability of these parallelisms having occurred by chance and concluded that the odds against this are 9,999 to 1.

Of course, Father Gerhard's book is not for people who want something to coast through while watching television. It is a technical work aimed at biblical scholars, some of whom are skeptical of the study's methodology. John Gerhard is serenely collecting these disagreements. Not long ago, he remarked that he will consider those objections in a revision of his book—a project he is working on right now.

John W. Donohue, S.J.

America

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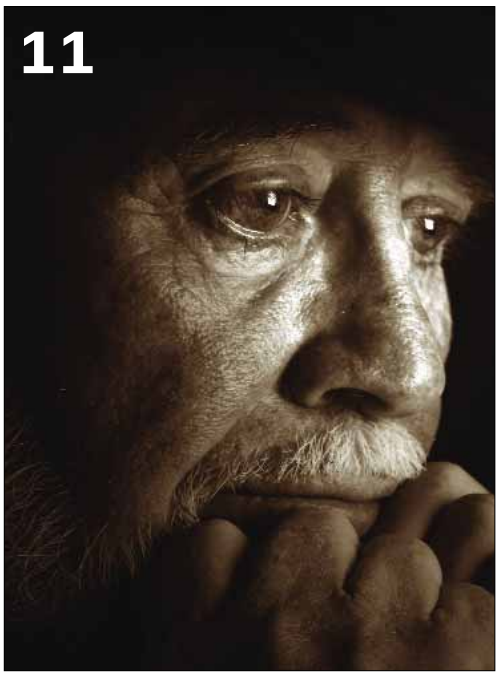
Cover photo Pope Benedict XVI waves as he arrives to lead his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Jan. 2. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)



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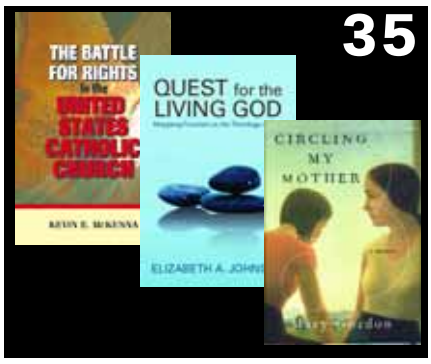


Harambee

One of the political cornerstones of modern-day Kenya is *harambee*. This Kiswahili term can be loosely translated "communal self-reliance" or "pulling together." *Harambee* has been an essential element in the relative success of this East African country, which hosts over 40 distinct ethnic groups, many of which live in close proximity to one another.

The violence that has followed December's presidential elections in Kenya, in which President Mwai Kibaki, a member of the Kikuyu ethnic group, ws challenged by Raila Odinga, a Luo, shocked those who imagined the country was free of the ethnic tensions that plague its neighbors. On Jan. 1, in the town of Kiambaa, 50 Kikuyus were killed after taking refuge in a mud-and-wattle church, which was torched by a mob angered over the election results. Charges of corruption raised by local officials and international observers, like the European Union, enraged some supporters of Mr. Odinga, who vented their anger on neighbors. And Kikuyus fought back. Among the hardest hit areas were the gargantuan slums of Nairobi, Mathare Valley and Kibera, where millions of people eke out a living while dwelling in crowded hovels. Hundreds have been killed, and Kenya, long a host country for refugees from surrounding countries, became itself a source of refugees.

Kenya may be less likely to follow the path into prolonged violence than its neighbors, since many members of these varied ethnic groups have long lived side by side and even intermarried. Yet the rage felt by many Kenyans is exacerbated by their poverty. Only joint talks between Mr. Kibaki and Mr. Odinga will help Kenya in the short term. In the long term, support from the rest of the world can help Kenya help itself, in pursuit of what could be called international *harambee*.

Feudal Democracy

Benazir Bhutto's designation of her 19-year-old son, Bilawal, as her political heir and formal leader of the Pakistan's People's Party is a metaphor for the political tangle that is Pakistan. The assassinated Ms. Bhutto presented herself as the bearer of popular aspirations for the return of democratic rule, yet the party she led had no democratic process to select a successor from the ranks. At the critical moment, the succession became a matter of bloodlines, with the young man's father standing in as regent. At the same time, Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state that is unable, and possibly unwilling, to extend the reach of the law to its own tribal territories. It is a U.S. ally in the war on terror, but elements in the military and intelligence establishments have ongoing ties with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Furthermore, while President Pervez Musharraf's rationale for emergency measures has been defense against terrorists, he has repeatedly deployed the military and police against his political opponents rather than against Islamic militants. Pakistan offers no ready options. The best that can be hoped for is an orderly transition to democratic rule along with restraint by the military. While ways should be found to thwart further collusion between elements of Pakistan's military and Islamic militants, the long-term focus of U.S. policy should be on enhancing the institutions of civil society, so that Pakistanis' desire for democracy can take deeper root.

Games and Rights in Beijing

The 29th Olympiad, to be celebrated next August in Beijing, could offer China a chance to improve its poor human rights record. The executive board of the International Olympic Committee met in December in Switzerland, and human rights organizations are urging it to use the 2008 Olympic Games as an occasion to press for needed reforms. These include ending detention without trial, limiting use of the death penalty (China leads the world) and protecting rights advocates from punishment for opposing government policies.

Amnesty International cites several examples of individuals punished for Games-related opposition activities. One activist, Ye Guozhu, was sentenced to 15 months of "re-education through labor" for preparing banners protesting the demolition of her property for Olympic projects. Far more extreme was the punishment meted out to Yang Chunlin. He was detained and reportedly tortured for his involvement in a petition entitled "We Want Human Rights, Not the Olympics." Similarly, housing activist Chen Xiaomei died in Shanghai in early July shortly after his release from prison, where he too was reportedly tortured. There have also been ongoing crackdowns on the media, including the imprisonment of journalists.

The principles of the Olympic charter emphasize the importance of "universal ethical principles." The Olympic committee's president, Jacques Rogge, M.D., has declared, "We are convinced that the Olympics will improve human rights in China." But given China's resistance to outside pressures, many will hear such a statement only with grave reservations.

A Time for Unconventional Wisdom

THE POLITICAL NEWS from Iowa and New Hampshire has undercut the conventional wisdom about our present political culture. The surprisingly decisive victory in Iowa of Barack Obama, an African-American candidate campaigning in a predominantly white state, damaged the image of Hillary Clinton as the inevitable Democratic candidate for 2008. The enthusiastic response in other parts of the country to his victory seemed to reveal a desire for change on the part of U.S. citizens that transcended party lines. Similarly, the upset victory of Arkansas's former Governor Mike Huckabee over the far better funded former governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney, rattled the conventional wisdom of the Republican Party as well as Mr. Romney.

The impact of the Iowa caucuses was immediately evident in the campaigning for the New Hampshire primary. All the Republican and Democratic candidates campaigning in New Hampshire began talking, some rather abruptly, about the need for change in America, a theme that had been at the center of the Obama candidacy and was, even to his rivals, vividly symbolized by his Iowa victory.

But on election night, Jan. 8, the conventional wisdom was once again overturned. The come-from-behind victories of Mrs. Clinton and Senator John McCain in the New Hampshire primary indicate that voters may want the change they seek coupled with a candidate with the experience to implement it.

The question before voters, therefore, is what kind of change shall we have? Many, including Senators Obama and McCain, have argued that true change must transcend traditional partisan divisions. Indeed, in this final year of the Bush presidency the nation does seem polarized to the point of paralysis—to such a degree that a group of elder statesmen, both Republicans and Democrats, organized a conference at the University of Oklahoma, whose president, David L. Boren, is a former Democratic senator, to explore the possibility of launching a candidacy that would move beyond "partisan polarization." Their guest of honor was Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York, who at various times in his political career has been a registered Democrat and a registered Republican and has most recently identified himself as an independent. While consistently denying that he is considering a run for the presidency, Mr. Bloomberg has done little to discourage the efforts of his staff and supporters to arouse enthusiasm for a Bloomberg presidential campaign that would be self-financed and officially nonpartisan.

The conventional wisdom, of course, says that a third-party candidate cannot win a general election, that the obstacles are too great. But 2008 is already shaping up to be an extraordinary political year; and as the campaign moves forward toward other important primary votes and state caucuses, the candidates and their consultants will have to decide whether the conventional campaign wisdom of the past remains effective. Are the citizens of the United States truly wearyed of the polarization that was the goal of Karl Rove and his generation of political strategists? Will the television attack ads that cost millions of dollars and insult the intelligence of the voter remain a profitable investment for the campaigns? Or have we reached a turning point in American political history, where the challenges of our time, which include international terrorism abroad and growing economic disparity at home, demand a new kind of politics that better reflects the aspirations that all Americans share rather than the particular interests that may divide them?

IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, the American people will have an opportunity to measure Barack Obama against his own rhetoric and decide whether he is the best qualified candidate to bring about the change his candidacy symbolizes. Other, more familiar candidates can be fairly judged by that standard as well: Do they truly recognize that politics-as-usual is an exhausted strategy for the America of tomorrow and that a different campaign strategy that seeks to overcome divisions rather than exploit them must lead to a different kind of government?

Could the presidential marathon of 2008 prove to be such a historic moment? A new politics of hope would really be a recovery of the genius of the distinctively American proposition, *e pluribus unum*—out of many peoples one nation can be formed—a promise to be renewed and fulfilled at different moments for different generations.

U.N. Calls for Moratorium on Executions

A Dec. 18 vote by the U.N. General Assembly to ratify a resolution calling for a moratorium on executions "with a view to abolishing the death penalty" was hailed as a "victory for the culture of life" by a Catholic activist opposed to capital punishment. Although the resolution is not binding on U.N. member states, the vote has strong implications, according to Mario Marazziti, spokesman for the Rome-based Sant'Egidio Community and head of its campaign against the death penalty.

The resolution—approved 104 to 54, with 29 abstentions—affirms that "there is no conclusive evidence of the death penalty's deterrent value and that any miscarriage or failure of justice in the death penalty's implementation is irreversible and irreparable." Marazziti, who was in New York for the vote, spoke to Catholic News Service the day before U.N. members voted but predicted the measure would be approved. He said a vote in favor of the moratorium would signify that capital punishment is not just a judicial matter for individual countries but a public issue that "concerns human rights." The Vatican said it was a "sign of hope" that the United Nations had voted for a moratorium on the death penalty. The United States was among the countries opposing the resolution.

Federico Lombardi, S.J., the Vatican spokesman, said the vote was "a very positive event." "It shows that despite the persistence of so much violence in the world, there is a growing awareness in the human family of the value of life, of the dignity of every person and of the concept of a nonvindictive punishment," Father Lombardi said. He said it showed that people increasingly favor justice that respects human rights and refuses "every violent solution." "Therefore, this vote should be interpreted as a sign of hope and a step forward on the way of peace."

Father Lombardi expressed the Vatican's appreciation for those who worked hard to support passage of the resolution, an accomplishment that seemed difficult to achieve not too long ago.

Pope Addresses Diplomats

Pope Benedict XVI meets with Vatican-accredited diplomats Jan. 7 at the Vatican.

Addressing diplomats from around the world, Pope Benedict XVI warned that numerous armed conflicts and social disorders have left global stability in a fragile situation. The pope said Jan. 7, that the latest attack on Christian churches in Iraq reflects a continuing climate of terrorism and violence in the country and illustrates the need for constitutional reform to safeguard the rights of minorities. On nuclear weapons, he urged the international community to undertake a joint effort to prevent terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. The pope also condemned "continually perpetrated attacks" against human life, in areas ranging from the death penalty to biotechnology, and criticized efforts to weaken the traditional family and the institution of marriage. The world's problems illustrate that real solutions must be "solidly anchored in natural law, given by the Creator," he said. "This is another reason why God can never be excluded from the horizon of man or of history. God's name is a name of justice; it represents an urgent appeal for peace," he said.

New Vatican Dialogue With Muslims Expected

The Vatican official in charge of interreligious dialogue said he is confident a new level of dialogue with Muslims will take place in 2008. "There is good will on both sides," said Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. After 138 Muslim scholars sent a letter to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders in October outlining a proposal for a new dialogue and greater understanding, the pope invited a representative group of the scholars to meet with him at the Vatican. At the same time, the pope suggested the scholars hold a working session with officials from Cardinal Tauran's office, the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies and the Pontifical Gregorian University. Jordan's Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, the architect of the Muslim scholars' project, wrote back to the Vatican in December suggesting that representatives meet in February or March to work out the details of the dialogue.

"I am very confident in the outcome of this meeting," Cardinal Tauran told Vatican Radio.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

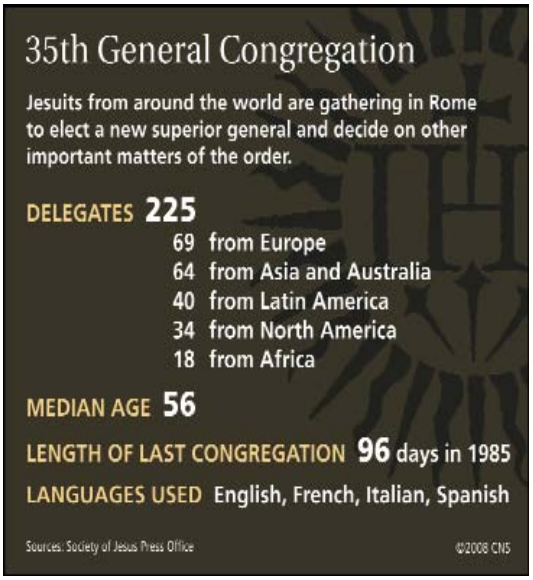
Bishops Appeal for Peace in Kenya

Orange Democratic Movement leader Raila Odinga, center, with his wife, Ida, attends Mass at All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi, Kenya, Jan. 6.

Following days of violence and death after the announcement of disputed election results, Kenya's Catholic bishops appealed to political leaders to make every effort to engage in dialogue to resolve the crisis. A church official also said a bishop in one of the areas with the worst violence had appealed for help for the local humanitarian crisis. "We appeal specifically to the political leaders...to reach out to one another through dialogue in order to seek a solution to the present situation, "said a Jan. 2 statement signed by 24 Kenyan bishops, including Cardinal John Njue of Nairobi, chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference. The four-page statement, *My Peace I Give You*, emphasized that Kenya needs peace based on justice and true brotherhood. The bishops offered to mediate the crisis and proposed a review of the election results. "We make an appeal to all responsible to seek ways like establishing a commission to audit and specifically review the tallying of the parliamentary and presidential polls, "said the bishops, noting allegations of electoral irregularities.

Jesuits to Choose New Leader

Before the tomb of their founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, 225 Jesuits prayed that God would be present with them and make his will known as they elect a new superior general. The Jesuits' 35th general congregation opened Jan. 7 with Mass in Rome's Church of the Gesù, which houses the tomb of St. Ignatius. At the end of the Mass, the current superior, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., 79, lighted an oil lamp before the founder's tomb and led his confreres in reciting St. Ignatius' prayer know as the Suscipe: "Take, Lord, and receive, all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess; you have given it all to me, I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours now, dispose of it according to your will; give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me. "Father Kolvenbach convoked the general congregation to consider his request to retire, to elect a new superior and to discuss major issues facing the Society of Jesus and its more than 19,000 members.



Shanghai Bishop Stresses Evangelization

Aloysius Jin Luxian

Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, S.J., of Shanghai has asked his flock to intensify evangelization efforts to mark this year's 400th anniversary of the introduction of Catholicism to Shanghai. The Asian church news agency UCA News reported Jan. 3 that in a pastoral letter released Dec. 24, Bishop Jin also urged Catholics to renew themselves spiritually in response to Pope Benedict XVI's call for prayers to Our Lady of Sheshan May 24. The pope made the call in his letter to Catholics in China, released June 30. Noting that May 24 is "dedicated to the liturgical memorial of Our Lady Help of Christians, who is venerated...at the Marian shrine of Sheshan in Shanghai, "he urged the church throughout the world to pray with Catholics in China on that date. Bishop Jin, 91, a Shanghai native and a Jesuit, started his letter by recounting the story of Catholicism's arrival in Shanghai in 1608. Bishop Jin told Catholics "not to forget the missioners, "including the Italian Jesuits Matteo Ricci and Julius Aleni and the German Jesuit Adam Schall, who contributed to local arts and sciences.

More Than 20 Church Workers Killed in 2007

From the war-torn lands of Iraq and Sri Lanka to violence-ridden neighborhoods

around the world, at least 20 Catholic Church workers were murdered or sacrificed their lives for others in 2007, the Vatican's Fides agency said. Each year Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, publishes a list of pastoral workers who died violently. The 2007 list was released Dec. 29. While Fides does not refer to the missionaries as martyrs—technically a term reserved for those the church formally recognizes as having given their lives for the faith—it said it was important to remember their sacrifices and to recognize that "each one of them, in a different way, contributed to the growth of the church in various parts of the world. "Besides the four killed in Iraq, two died in Mexico, three in the Philippines, two in Colombia, two in Spain, two in South Africa and one each in Brazil, Guatemala, Kenya, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.

Poland's 'Best Cook' Releases DVD

Sister Anastazja Pustelnik, a member of the Daughters of Divine Love in Poland, holds one of her cakes in this April 2007 photo.

A Polish nun who thought up her best cake recipe in a dream has released a DVD with tips on her culinary masterpieces. "When I first joined my order, I asked to work in the kitchen, "said Sister Anastazja Pustelnik, a member of the Daughters of Divine Love. "I spent years cooking for the Jesuit fathers in Krakow, and they liked my recipes so much they proposed publishing them. I thought they meant some kind of brochure. I never suspected it would lead to several books, "she said at a specially convened press conference at the Polish bishops' conference headquarters in mid-December. The nun, whose four recipe books already have sold 850,000 copies, spoke at the release of "Sister Anastazja's Cookery School, "which shows her preparing some of her tastiest delights. She said she had inherited some recipes from her parents and others from older nuns, but had thought up most herself, including the very best, "A Nun's Secret, "which came to her in a dream.

Hibernians to Expand Pro-Life Efforts

Jack Meehan, president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, has urged fellow members to "fight the scourge of abortion "by increasing their support of pro-life efforts. Meehan, who resides in Quincy, Mass., sent a letter to members of the Irish-American lay Catholic group Dec. 28 asking them to "stand up and speak out as never before in defense of human life. "He suggested that the Hibernians expand their pro-life activism with "practical and material support "by continuing to help expectant mothers seeking aid from pregnancy crisis centers and Birthright, an international organization with local chapters that assists women experiencing crisis pregnancies. Meehan also said group members should continue to support Priests for Life and purchase educational pro-life materials for schools and families. They were also advised to add the Sisters of Life to their Hibernian Charity program donations. Founded in 1991, the Sisters of Life are known nationally for their pro-life work and for giving pro-life retreats in their New York-area convents.

Pope to Visit Historic German Parish

Pope Benedict XVI will lead an ecumenical prayer service for national and local Christian leaders April 18 at St. Joseph's Church, a historic German parish in the Yorkville section of Manhattan. The German-born pope will conduct the late afternoon service at St. Joseph's on the first day of his April 18-20 visit to the archdiocese, after a speech at the United Nations in the morning. The pope also will celebrate a Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral on the morning of April 19 for priests, deacons and religious, becoming the first pope to celebrate a Mass in St. Patrick's. In New York, the pope also will celebrate a Mass at Yankee Stadium April 20, after a morning visit to ground zero where he will attend a ceremony with responders to the 2001 terrorist attack and victims' family members. On April 19 he will meet with disabled children in the chapel of St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, and then address a large gathering of young people and seminarians on the seminary grounds.

India's Bishops Demand Investigation Into Violence Against Christians

India's Catholic bishops have demanded a federal investigation into the Hindu violence against Christians in Orissa state and are seeking compensation for damages Christians suffered. The bishops also urged that paramilitary forces under the central government's control be deployed at all the "affected and sensitive places "to prevent any further recurrences, "as the local police have not been able to control the situation, "reported the Asian churchnews agency UCA News.The violence, which has claimed five lives, began on Christmas Eve and has caused damage costing about $700,000, said church officials at a press conference Dec. 31 at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India center in New Delhi. The violence began after about 500 Hindu radicals attacked a tent displaying the Nativity scene that Christians of various denominations put up in Bamunigam, a small town in the Kandhamal district. The district is about 210 miles southwest of Bhubaneswar, the state capital.

Extremists attacked and burned five parish churches, at least 50 village churches, six convents, three presbyteries, six hostels, two seminaries and a vocational training center, a bishops' statement said.

Archbishop Raphael Cheenath of Cuttack-Bhubaneshwar, in Orissa state, said they also desecrated churches and burned documents, vehicles and furniture.

Dynasties

‘The phenomenon is not just about two ambitious families, but about a political culture.’

WITH GOOD REASON, guardians of republican virtue are sounding alarms over the prospect of another Clinton presidency. Should Hillary Clinton return to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in 2009, this time as the principal tenant, and should she receive an extension on that lease, the Clinton and Bush families will have monopolized the White House for 28 years.

This magazine was among the earliest voices to express concern about two-family rule. Many other observers have echoed the sentiments in recent weeks, as the caucus and primary season got underway.

The prospect of two families dominating the presidency over such a long period is a serious matter indeed for a nation that prides itself as a republic of merit. It smacks of Old World privilege and exclusion, at odds with America’s founding ideals and its current passion for diversity at the highest levels of power. What will historians a century from now say about us and our times if the roster of presidents from 1989 to 2017 reads like a printing mistake: Bush, Clinton, Bush, Clinton?

They might well make an observation that ought to be obvious to us without the benefit of historical perspective. Our political campaigns have become so dependent on massive amounts of private funds that candidates with name recognition have a huge advantage over their lesser-known competitors. Contributors are more likely to give to candidates whose names they know because of family accomplishments or simple celebrity, just as consumers are more likely to purchase brands they recognize regardless of the products’ merits or drawbacks.

A realist might argue that we should hardly be surprised to see politics treated like any other family business or trade. Sons and daughters follow their parents into medicine, police work, professional sports, entertainment, even—perish the thought—journalism. Why should political families be any different? Indeed, they are not, and that has been true since the republic’s founding. The Adams family is but the most obvious example from the nation’s early years; the Kennedy family is the best example in modern times. Three Kennedy brothers ran for president in the space of two decades. The republic did not fall. Two Harrisons, grandfather and grandson, won the presidency in the 19th century. Two cousins named Roosevelt held the presidency for 20 years during the first half of the 20th century.

While it is true that the United States has never lacked for ruling families, the possibility of a Bush-Clinton-Bush-Clinton succession has raised important questions about our commitment to republican principles, our conflation of fame with accomplishment and our belief that the nation’s highest offices are open to anybody with ambition and talent. If our choices are limited to members of a few politically active families, and if politics begins to attract the same old names year after year, we surely are in deep trouble.

From a spectator’s point of view, it is hard to know what would drive the child or spouse of a successful politician to have a political career of one’s own. Politics can be a tough way to make a living, and it is tougher still on children and spouses, who often must endure long absences and frequent lack of attention. Beware politicians who talk about family values. If they have been in office for any prolonged period of time, chances are they have missed more soccer games or recitals than they’ve attended. After all, there is always another lobbyist to greet, another contributor to meet. Children or spouses might be expected to resent a profession that seems to place so little value on genuine family values. No doubt some do.

Nevertheless, we do seem to be producing a political class based on blood lines and intermarriage rather than on republican merit. George W. Bush is, of course, Exhibit No. 1: He is not only the son of a president, but the grandson of a U.S. senator as well. Even the president’s most fervent supporters—a group that, curiously, does not seem to include the current crop of Republican presidential candidates—would have to concede that his career was built on name recognition.

And, of course, he is hardly unique. Hillary Clinton might well have emerged as a political force on her own if her husband decided to teach high school history after graduating from Georgetown University. She is smart, ambitious and focused. But her marriage, not her merits, propelled her to election to the Senate in 2000 and then to the top of the presidential polls this year. She clearly is a hard-working senator, and her positions certainly reflect mainstream Democratic policies and thought; but Joseph Biden and Christopher Dodd also are conventional Democrats who work hard and who have far more experience than Mrs. Clinton. Their polls and fund-raising tallies could not overcome Clinton’s celebrity in Iowa.

The Clinton-Bush phenomenon is not just about two ambitious families, but about a political culture that worships instant name recognition as the quickest way to the hearts and wallets of those who fund our election campaigns, from the presidential level on down. Until we can figure out a better way to finance our campaigns, the trend is likely to continue. Many political consultants and financial backers simply believe that the public is too lazy and unmotivated to give new faces a chance.

The next few weeks will tell us whether the cynics are right. Sadly, their track record in recent years has been awfully good. ***Terry Golway***

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SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO BY LAURIN RINDER

'Medically ordinary' does not always mean morally ordinary.

Church Teaching and My Father's Choice

– BY JOHN J. HARDT –

"IF I'M EVER IN A SITUATION where I'm permanently unconscious and unable to eat," says my father, "I'm begging you: Let me go. I don't want to be kept alive by a feeding tube." We are sitting at my parents' table on a pleasant Sunday morning, with advance health care directives sharing space with coffee cups and the newspaper.

I probe my father's reasoning about such an important decision: "What if I think

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you're able to recognize us, but you are unable to speak, communicate or engage us? What about end-stage Alzheimer's or Parkinson's, where you might stop eating on your own? You both know that doctors are rather certain that patients in a persistent vegetative state don't experience pain or discomfort, right?"

No response.

"What if *I* want to keep you alive in that condition?" I ask with a smile.

My father responds with a chuckle. "If there were a decent chance that I'd get better *and everything else is working well*, then I'd trust your judgment," he tells me. "Otherwise, the answer is no. Let me go!"

"But why," I ask, "if you're unaware of your own condition?"

"Because I know *now* that I don't want to continue like that. What am I continuing for? With whom could I communicate? Whom could I love? Would I not have somewhere better to be, anyway?" My father's quip reflects our shared faith in Christ's salvific death and resurrection. "Let me go."

Real people bear both the grace and the burden of thinking as the church does about the meaning of living and dying. So it is with my still-living father's words in mind that I think about a recent statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concerning the morality of removing artificial nutrition and hydration from a patient who lives in a persistent vegetative state. I have my parents' power of attorney for health care, a decision they made prompted by the publicity surrounding the Terri Schiavo case. I now have a more personal stake in a discussion that had already engaged me professionally, as a Catholic bioethicist teaching in a Catholic medical school. It is now my responsibility as a son who cherishes his parents to help ensure that the manner of their dying as Catholics will be consistent with the way they lived as Catholics.

Vegetative State

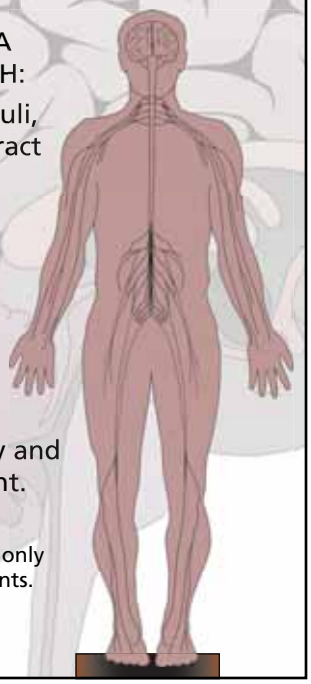
Severe brain injury occurs when a prolonged unconscious state or coma lasts days, weeks or months.

VEGETATIVE STATE DESCRIBES A SEVERE BRAIN INJURY IN WHICH:

- A person can respond to stimuli, but there is no ability to interact with the environment.
- Eye opening can be spontaneous or in response to stimulation.
- General responses to pain exist (increased heart rate, respiration or sweating).
- Sleep-wake cycles, respiratory and digestive functions are evident.

There is no test to specifically diagnose vegetative state. The diagnosis is made only by repetitive neurobehavioral assessments.

Source: Brain Injury Association of America
Reviewed by Carlos H. Espinel, M.D.



The U.S. Bishops' Questions

In March 2004, Pope John Paul II gave an address in which he spoke about artificial nutrition and hydration for patients in a "vegetative state." He wrote that artificial nutrition and hydration "always represents a *natural means* of preserving life, not a *medical act*." Nutrition and hydration, then, should "be considered, in principle, *ordinary and proportionate*" means if they achieve their "proper finality"—in this case, providing nourishment to the patient.

That papal statement set off a wave of reaction from the press, the public and the faithful. Many wondered how the Holy See could hold that the surgical insertion of a feeding tube through the abdominal wall did not constitute a "medical act." Others wondered how the removal of assisted nutrition and hydration in patients in a persistent vegetative state could be an act of "euthanasia by omission" if the intention of the act was to remove an excessively burdensome treatment rather than to kill the patient. Still others questioned whether the description of persistent vegetative state as a "stable" condition was a fair description of a patient who without medical intervention would surely have died from a devastating brain injury that had permanently eliminated the patient's ability to eat and swallow with conscious purpose.

Seeking clarification of the allocution, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops sent a letter on July 11, 2005, to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the following question:

> Is the administration of food and water (whether by natural or artificial means) to a patient in a "vegetative state" morally obligatory except when they cannot be assimilated by the patient's body or cannot be administered to the patient without causing significant physical discomfort?
>
> When nutrition and hydration are being supplied by artificial means to a patient in a "permanent vegetative state," may they be discontinued when competent physicians judge with moral certainty that the patient will never recover consciousness?

The bishops' questions raise three possible exceptions to the general rule that artificial nutrition and hydration for the patient in a persistent vegetative state constitutes ordinary care: first, when artificial nutrition and hydration cannot be assimilated by the patient; second, when artificial nutrition and hydration might cause "significant physical discomfort" to the patient; and third, when there is no hope that the patient will recover consciousness.

The Congregation's Response and Commentary

The congregation answered the questions on Sept. 15, 2007, in a document entitled *Responses to Certain Questions of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Concerning Artificial Nutrition and Hydration*. The response to both questions maintains that in principle artificial nutrition and hydration constitutes ordinary care for these patients *in all circumstances*. In the accompanying commentary, however, the C.D.F. calls attention to the phrase "in principle," present in the original papal allocution, which allows for possible exceptions to a general rule.

The doctrinal congregation then identifies four such exceptions: first, when remote geography and/or extreme poverty make the administration of artificial nutrition and hydration impossible; second, when "emerging complications" prohibit the assimilation of artificial nutrition and hydration; third, when, "in some rare cases," it "may be excessively burdensome;" and fourth, when, "in some rare cases," it "may cause significant physical discomfort."

In exploring the significance of these exceptions, we must recognize that the document is restricted to a discussion of patients in a persistent vegetative state, a diagnosis that affects only a miniscule number of patients. We must also recognize that a growing popular acceptance of outright euthanasia influenced the congregation's thinking.

'Medically' Versus 'Morally' Ordinary

The U.S. bishops sought to establish the boundaries within which artificial nutrition and hydration for patients in a permanent vegetative state must be judged morally obligatory. But the presupposition of their questions seems curious in the light of Catholic moral tradition, which has always recognized that a significant difference could exist, in a particular case, between that which is medically ordinary versus that which is morally ordinary.

Procedures that are medically ordinary, in the sense that they are readily available, technically feasible and of biological benefit to the patient, are not always morally required. This important distinction can be found in a document issued by the Diocese of Richmond, Va., that

was intended to help patients and families think about their health care decisions:

> What the medical profession might consider as "medically ordinary" is not necessarily the same as what the Church states is "morally ordinary." Doctors might consider a particular procedure "ordinary" because they practice it frequently and expertly. Yet you cannot consider any medical procedure to be always morally ordinary no matter how routinely it is practiced.

The focus of the U.S. bishops' questions and the C.D.F.'s response is the objective, medical feasibility of a particular procedure. Yet this limited perspective does not take into account in any explicit and satisfying way the patient's and the patient's family's subjective and prudent judgment of whether such a procedure in their particular circumstances is morally ordinary and therefore obligatory.

Quoting from John Paul II's papal allocution of 2004, the C.D.F. ties the determination of what is morally ordinary to an objective judgment of its medical efficacy: "It is therefore obligatory, to the extent to which, and for as long as, it is shown to accomplish its proper finality, which is the hydration and nourishment of the patient." In most cases, a patient's body can assimilate the nourishment that is administered, so that the use of artificial nutrition and hydration can be considered a medically ordinary procedure. But after considering the question of technical efficacy, must one judge this procedure to be morally ordinary when a patient or a patient's proxy has judged the intervention to be excessively burdensome?

The Patient's Judgment

The *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* offers further clarification on this important distinction. Directives 56 and 57 state that the determination of what constitutes morally ordinary or extraordinary care should be based on "the patient's judgment" of the benefits and burdens of a particular treatment. Directive 58 designates that "[t]here should be a presumption in favor of providing nutrition and hydration to all patients, including patients who require medically assisted nutrition and hydration as long as this is of sufficient benefit to outweigh the burdens involved for the patient." It is the phrase "in the patient's judgment" and the accompanying prudential consideration of burdens and benefits that preserves the distinction between what is medically ordinary and what is morally ordinary. Were this not the case, we would leave all health care decisions to the discretion of competent physicians, who could judge what is medically ordinary in terms of technical efficacy.

In addition to citing the criterion of assimilation, the congregation offers three more objective criteria that could justify exceptions to the general rule: first, when there exist medical problems associated with the administration of artificial nutrition and hydration (the possibility of infection or aspiration, for example); second, when a remote geographical location may preclude access to the technology; and third, when extreme poverty makes the procedure prohibitively expensive. But what would be a moral judgment of these objective circumstances?

Such circumstancs include where one lives, what financial resources are available and what medical complications are likely to arise from the procedure. If the congregation intends to restrict the possible exceptions to its general principle to those cases where objective circumstances make the procedure practically impossible, then there would be no need for directives 56, 57 or 58 or, for that matter, any moral reflection at all.

Such an interpretation, however, runs counter to the experience of patients familiar with the procedure, patients whose consciences are informed by their lifelong Catholic faith. My father, in our conversation at the kitchen table, for example, did not suggest any inclination to end his life prematurely. He does not seek a false sense of control over his dying that betrays the truth of our Christian narrative,

namely, that suffering is constitutive of who we are as brothers and sisters of Christ and that the experience of dying, while possibly frightening and lonely, is ultimately identified with Christ's dying and redeemed in Christ's rising. But his judgment, informed by his faith, is that a massive neurological injury that leaves him permanently unconscious, unable to purposefully eat or swallow, would constitute in itself a fatal pathology, one that carries no obligation to persist any longer in that state.

When I consider my father's questions—"What am I persisting for? With whom could I communicate? Who could I love? Don't I have a better place to be?"—I hear faithful echoes of our Catholic tradition. That tradition consistently affirms that while biological life is an important value, it is not an absolute good. How should my father judge a future burden that is not his now and, were it ever to become his burden, he would not be able to judge?

Perhaps it is in the fourth exception noted by the C.D.F. that my father's thinking finds its voice. While the other three exceptions offered by the congregation focus on objective circumstances, this final exception simply notes those "rare cases" where artificial nutrition and hydration "may be excessively burdensome." This exception stands out because it comes with no modification. It simply holds open a possibility. While the C.D.F. does not offer any examples, it sounds to me like the condition my father described over our kitchen table.

My father's words tell me that he judged the maintenance of his baseline biological existence as a P.V.S. patient to be an excessive burden. It is a burden to him to know now that we, his family, would care for him in this condition for a prolonged period of time. It is a burden to him to know that he would be unable to engage in meaningful human activity. And, finally, it is a burden to him to think that his death from a devastating neurological injury was being held at bay by the insertion of an unwanted and, in his judgment, invasive feeding tube. My father believes that such a procedure would pose an unwanted and unnecessary obstacle to his next life in heaven, the end of a journey he began at birth, the fulfillment of a promise sealed in his baptism.

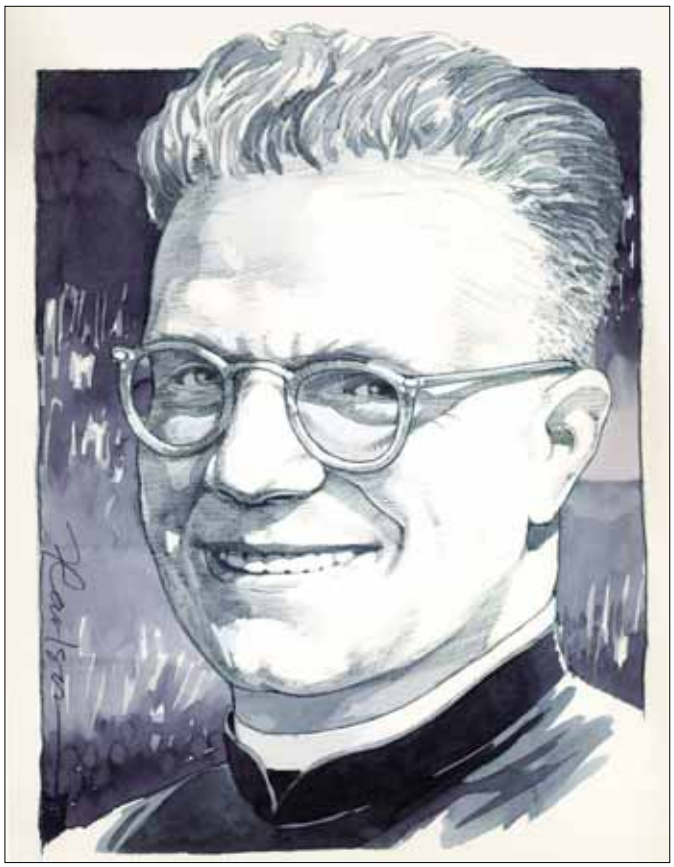
In other words, my father has judged that the burden of persisting in a vegetative state far outweighs the benefit of being sustained that way. This is, in my view, a very Catholic way of thinking, shared by other faithful Catholics, and consistent with Catholic tradition. A

An audio interview with John Paris, S.J., on end of life care and other moral dilemmas, at americamagazine.org.

A Martyr to the Nazis

Hitler wanted Alfred Delp forgotten, but his way of resistance still inspires.

BY ANDREAS R. BATLOGG



ART BY FREDERICK H. CARLSON

ALFRED DELP, S.J., WAS HANGED for high treason in Berlin-Plötzensee at the age of 37. He had been condemned to death only a few months before the end of World War II, after a mock trial presided over by the fanatical priest-hater Roland Freisler. The execution took place just after three o'clock in the afternoon of Feb. 2, 1945. It was the feast of the Presentation, one of the days when Jesuits have traditionally professed their final vows. At Hitler's command, Delp's ashes were scattered to the winds. There was to be nothing by which to remember him.

Had Delp survived the war, he might have returned to the editorial staff of the periodical Stimmen der Zeit in Munich, where he worked from July 1939 to April 1941, when the Gestapo abolished the magazine.

In contrast to the popular Jesuit Rupert Mayer, whom Pope John Paul II beatified in 1987 along with the Jewish Carmelite Edith Stein in Munich's Olympic Stadium, Delp was not given the "honor of the altar." Nor has he exerted such broad influence among other faith communities as Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

In the Face of Death

The best-selling book *In the Face of Death*, a posthumously published collection of Delp's meditations, notes, journal fragments and letters from his six months of imprisonment, stands alongside Bonhoeffer's later classic, *Letters and Papers From Prison*. After the war, Delp's book suddenly made his name known to a broader public. The small volume was regularly enlarged with newly discovered texts. It went through many editions and came out in paperback in 1958. Translated into French, English and Spanish, the book has become a classic and belongs in the canon of 20th-century spiritual writing. It was one volume of a trilogy whose other parts, "Committed to the Earth" and "The Mighty God," were edited and published later.

Thomas Merton judged Delp's words smuggled out of prison to be "perhaps the most insightful…Christian meditations of our time." In the Introduction to an American translation that appeared in the 1960s under the title *Prison Writings*, Merton did not hesitate to describe Delp as a "mystic." More than six months of confinement in Berlin brought about a striking change in his personality, a significant maturing of which one reads with increasing fascination. Solitary confinement, torture, hunger and depression all changed Delp, but they did not break him. He underwent a change not chosen but forced upon him, a change that especially impresses young people today, and his reflections have become a legacy for future generations. Hitler's plan for the priest did not succeed. Alfred Delp is not only known today; he still inspires.

New interest in Delp's writings during the 1980s led to the publication of his *Collected Writings*, edited in five volumes by Roman Bleistein, S.J. In 1989 Bleistein also published a valuable biography, *Alfred Delp: The History of a Witness*. The motto for the 1984 German Katholikentag—

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an important gathering of Catholics from all walks of life that takes place every two years—held that year in Munich, recalled Delp's words: "Let us trust life, since we do not have to live it alone, for God lives it with us." Delp, his hands bound, had scratched those words on the wall of his prison cell on Christmas Eve 1944.

"The world is so full of God. From all its pores, it seems, God wells toward us," Delp had written a few weeks before, as he waited for his trial, expressing a sober mysticism that was at the same time a "mysticism of open eyes," to use Johannes Baptist Metz's phrase. Delp did not transfer his longing for a better world prematurely into the hereafter.

A Lutheran Background

When Maria Bernauer held the newborn Alfred in her arms on Sept. 15, 1907, she harbored only one thought: Will my son's father finally marry me now? After his sister Justina, Alfred was the second child born outside of marriage. The wedding took place a month later, and the boy became "legitimate"; then four more children were born into the family.

Although Alfred was baptized as a Catholic, his Protestant father insisted that he attend a Lutheran school and receive his religious education there. Still, after the family moved from Mannheim to Lampert-heim, the teenager kept in contact with his Catholic parish. He was confirmed as a Lutheran in March 1921, but a slap in the face from a Lutheran pastor—he had come late for instruction because he was visiting the Catholic pastor—led to a change: in June that same year he received first Communion and then confirmation in the Catholic Church. The following year he attended the diocesan seminary in Dieburg, joined the Bund Neudeutschland (a Catholic youth movement) and four years later passed his final secondary school examinations at the head of his class. A month later, on April 22, 1926, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Tisis near Feldkirch, Austria.

After two years as a novice, the young Jesuit followed the order's usual course of studies: three years studying philosophy; three years as a prefect, first at the boarding school Stella Matutina in Feldkirch and then for several months at Sankt Blasien in Germany's Black Forest; followed by four years of theology in Valkenburg, Holland, and in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. On June 24, 1937—exactly 400 years after the ordination of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus—Delp was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Michael Faulhaber in Munich. Among the other Jesuits ordained with him was Alois Grillmeier, S.J., who would become a theological expert at the Second Vatican Council and, in his old age, a cardinal.

Since the authorities refused to allow Delp to matriculate at a German university, in the summer of 1939 he joined Stimmen der Zeit, where he was responsible for sociological topics. After the editorial building was confiscated and expropriated by the Gestapo, in early summer 1941 Delp became administrator of the old parish church of St. George in the Bogenhausen section of Munich. He was a beloved, wholly engaged priest for his people. He also made fun of Gestapo informers as they copied down his sermons.

From the Pen of Alfred Delp

Here I am at the parting of the ways and I must take the other road after all. The death sentence has been passed and the atmosphere is so charged with enmity and hatred that no appeal has any hope of succeeding. So the whole proceedings turned into a sort of comedy developing a theme. It was not justice—it was simply the carrying out of determination to destroy. Towards noon I will celebrate Mass once more and then in God's name take the road under his providence and guidance.

—"Letter to the Brethren," Jan. 11, 1945

It has become an odd sort of life I am leading. It is so easy to get used to existence again that one has to keep reminding oneself that death is round the corner. Condemned to death. The thought refuses to penetrate; it almost needs force to drive it home. The thing that makes this kind of death so singular is that one feels so vibrantly alive with the will to live unbroken and every nerve tingling with life. A malevolent external force is the only thing that can end it. The usual intimations of approaching death are therefore lacking. One of these days the door will open, the jailer will say, "Pack up. The car will be here in half an hour." We have often heard this and know exactly what it is like.

—To his friend M., after Jan. 11, 1945.

The Kreisau Circle

Alfred Delp first came into contact with Count Helmut James von Moltke (1907-45) in March 1942, when Moltke asked Augustin Rösch, the Jesuit superior of the Upper German Province, for the assistance of a sociologist. The idea was to plan for a Christian social order in Germany after the expected collapse of the Third Reich under Hitler. In May and October 1942 and then again in June 1943, Delp took part in meetings of several days each. The group around Moltke, named the Kreisau Circle after the count's

estate in Silesia, was not strictly speaking a resistance movement. There was no question of violently overthrowing the government.

During the meetings at the Kreisau estate, Freya von Moltke, the count's wife, was particularly struck by Delp's youthfulness. The 96-year-old countess recently described her recollections when she was the guest of honor at a symposium held by the Catholic Academy of Bavaria in Munich. (She had advised her husband not to invite Konrad Adenauer to join the group because, born in 1876, he was "much too old." In 1949 Adenauer became the first postwar chancellor of Germany.)

Count Moltke was arrested in January 1944 because he had warned a friend who was about to be arrested. Moltke's conspiratorial activity, however, was not discovered. Unaware of the conspiracy, Delp visited Count Claus von Stauffenberg in Bamberg in June. When von Stauffenberg was arrested on the morning of July 21, the day after a failed attempt on Hitler's life in the Wolfschanze (the Führer's bunker in East Prussia), Delp was completely surprised. Seven days later the Gestapo arrested Delp as well.

Alfred Delp was a promising intellectual. His study of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* was one of the first serious discussions of the philosopher by any Catholic. Karl Rahner said "with a certain pride, that Delp was a good friend of mine"; Rahner had taught Latin to Delp, then a novice, in the late 1920s, and the contact between the two never broke off. Just before Delp was arrested, Rahner learned from him personally, in the apartment Delp maintained as a parish priest in Munich, about his contacts with the Kreisau Circle. "I believe," wrote Rahner, "that Delp really belongs in the first rank of witnesses whose Christianity motivated them to resist the horror of National Socialism."

But Delp was also an intense, impulsive man, who could seem to be a know-it-all. That caused offense, as did his heavy cigar smoking and loud laughter. Among Jesuits he was considered a difficult character, almost a kind of tragic hero, like T. E. Lawrence, the English archeologist, diplomat and colonel known as Lawrence of Arabia, whom Delp much admired.

Tensions with Rösch, Delp's provincial superior, were longstanding. Twice, in fact, Rösch put off granting permission for him to pronounce final vows. It was only on Dec. 8, 1944, that Delp, in prison with hands bound, was able to pronounce his vows in the presence of Franz von Tattenbach, S.J., as representative of Rösch, who was by then hiding from the Nazis.

Final Hours

The Nazis had offered Delp a reprieve if he would leave the Jesuit order. Instead, on the day of his execution, Alfred Delp wrote to his fellow Jesuits:

> The real reason for my conviction is that I am and have remained a Jesuit. They could not show a connection to July 20. And the Stauffenberg charge could not be upheld. The other sentences that really had to do with knowledge of July 20 were less serious and more matter of fact. The atmosphere was so full of hate and hostility. The basic thesis was: a Jesuit is a priori an enemy and opponent of the Reich.

In the last hours of his life, Delp still hoped that the Russian troops would press forward to Berlin and free him. "Can't history be a little faster?" he asked the Catholic prison chaplain, who had no reply. "In half an hour," said Delp, fearful at the brink of death, "I shall know more than you."

That same day Freisler condemned to death Dietrich Bonhoeffer's brother Klaus and his brother-in-law Rüdiger Schleicher. The next day an air raid alarm went off during another trial, and the court building was hit dead center. Freisler, on his way to a bomb shelter in the basement, was killed by the collapsing ruins.

What We Inherit From Alfred Delp

In commemoration of Alfred Delp's birth (Sept. 15, 1907), a number of events were held in Germany, starting on Dec. 8, 2006, when the Alfred Delp Society in Mannheim awarded honorary membership to Fritz Delp, his youngest brother, and former Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Witnesses from his time are still alive: people who heard his sermons, friends and youth group members. On all of them Delp made a lasting impression.

Remembering the martyr Alfred Delp is a matter of conviction, of knowing that we must keep present before us his way of resistance against a totalitarian regime. What he wrote about a new social order, inspired by the social encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), could later be found in the basic concerns of labor unions and political parties. Delp thought creatively about the missionary and servant roles of the church and critically about the church's tendency toward bureaucratic rigidity. His ideas on the future role of religious orders now seem quite modern. Without God, Delp was convinced, we cannot really be human beings. And he would have raised critical questions about today's "generalized religiosity," which has little to do with God.

What obligations does Delp's legacy impose on us? Alfred Delp was not easy to manage. He was an uncomfortable, often non-conforming Jesuit, and in that way, even for his own order, a prophetic figure. His life, at risk of death in his prison cell, has become a legacy. We have more to learn from him than anyone as yet can say. A

"Hitler and the Jesuits," from November 1944, at americamagazine.org.

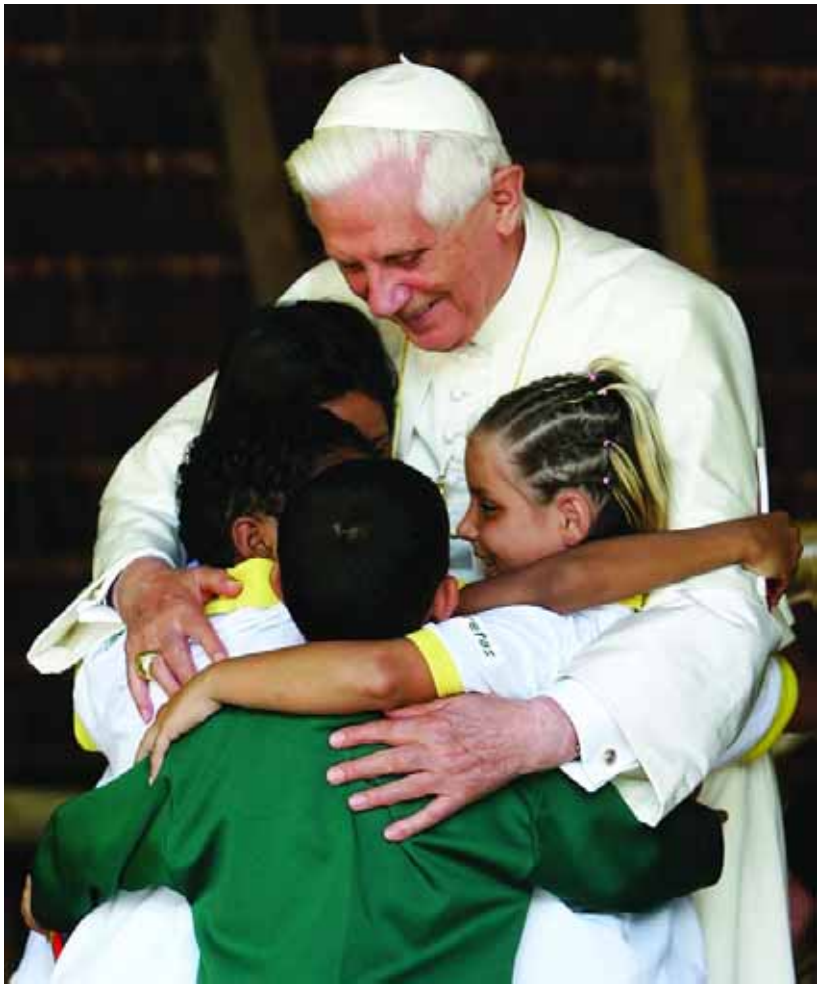
Saved by Hope

Insights from Pope Benedict's new encyclical.

BY GERALD O'COLLINS

"POPE ATTACKS THE CRUELTY of Atheism" and "Pope Replies to *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins" were two of the headlines that greeted Benedict XVI's second encyclical, *Saved by Hope* (*Spe Salvi*). An Anglican bishop was more on target when he told me: "I welcome this encyclical on Christian hope. Hope is essential, but too often it's been neglected. I'm very glad to find a papal encyclical for the first time taking hope as its theme."

What are the surprises in this encyclical? Do parts of it take us beyond the pope's first encyclical, *God Is Love*? Does this second pastoral letter show any links to *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, a book on hope that Joseph Ratzinger published in 1977? Are there any significant omissions?



CNS PHOTO/TONY GENTILE, REUTERS

The Letter's Content

The pope's message combines a pastor's concern for his people with a scholarly use of Scripture and an effective appeal to some great voices in the Catholic tradition from Augustine of Hippo to Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, a prisoner for 13 years, nine of them spent in solitary confinement. The encyclical is peppered with references and insights of every kind: biblical, doctrinal, spiritual, philosophical, historical and artistic.

"Young people," the pope writes, "can have the hope of a great and satisfying love; the hope of a certain position in their profession, or of some success that will prove decisive for the rest of their lives." But even when such hopes are fulfilled, it becomes evident that "only something infinite" will satisfy, a "great hope" that is something more than we can "ever attain" or achieve for ourselves (Nos. 30, 31). One hears an echo of Augustine's words at the beginning of the *Confessions*, "Our heart is restless until it finds rest in you, O Lord." Pope Benedict draws on Augustine to underline our primordial hunger for true and lasting happiness, for that eternal life in which we will experience a totally satisfying fullness and be "plunged into the ocean of infinite love" (Nos. 11, 12).

The pope appreciates "the experience of a great love" that can give "a new meaning" to our existence. Yet by themselves such experiences remain "fragile" and will, in any case, be "destroyed by death." We need the "unconditional love" (No. 26), which Paul described luminously in cosmic language: "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39).

Almost half of the encyclical (Nos. 32-48) is dedicated to what the pope calls "settings for learning and practicing hope." He names prayer as the "school of hope." An "exercise of desire," prayer also entails "a process of inner purification which opens us up to God and thus to our fellow human beings." There is an "intimate relationship between prayer and hope."

Pope Benedict recalls a "precious"

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book by Cardinal Van Thuan, *Prayers of Hope*, writing:

> During thirteen years in jail, in a situation of seemingly utter hopelessness, the fact that he could listen and speak to God became for him an increasing power of hope, which enabled him, after his release, to become for people all over the world a witness to hope—to that great hope which does not wane even in the nights of solitude
>
> (Nos. 32-33).

"All serious and upright human conduct," he insists, "is hope in action." But as well as practicing hope through working "towards a brighter and more humane world" (No. 35), we can grow in hope through the things we suffer. We must "limit" and "fight against suffering," but "we cannot eliminate it." The pope adds: "It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it, and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love." Benedict then quotes a vivid passage from a letter by the Vietnamese martyr Paul Le-Bao-Tinh (d. 1857) that illustrates the "transformation of suffering through the power of hope." It was a "letter from Hell" that described the hideous conditions of the prison where tyrants abused and brutalized their victims. Yet the martyr wrote, "In the midst of these torments, which usually terrify others, I am, by the grace of God, full of joy and gladness, because I am not alone—Christ is with me" (No. 37).

The pope looks beyond the suffering embodied in Christian martyrdom to broader issues: "The true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer. This holds true both for the individual and for society." A society that "is unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of helping to share their suffering and to bear it inwardly through 'compassion' is a cruel and inhuman society." Yet society at large will not support suffering members in their trials, unless "individuals are capable of doing so themselves" and personally "able to find meaning in suffering" (No. 38). In effect, the pope challenges both the public and every individual with the questions: Do you find any meaning in suffering? How do you relate to those who suffer? What do you do for them? Real Christian hope is always hope for others—and, especially, an active, compassionate hope for those who suffer.

The encyclical is peppered with references and insights of every kind: biblical, doctrinal, spiritual, philosophical, historical and artistic.

Along with the role that prayer and suffering should play here and now as settings for learning and practicing hope, the pope turns to the future and recalls the expectation that the risen Christ "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." On the east end of ancient churches it became customary to depict the Lord returning as king, while the west wall "normally portrayed the Last Judgment as a symbol of our responsibility for our lives." This was the "scene, which followed and accompanied the faithful as they went out to resume their daily routine." Unfortunately, as the iconography of the Last Judgment developed, "more and more prominence was given to its ominous and frightening aspects, which obviously held more fascination for artists than the splendor of hope, often all too well concealed beneath the horrors" (No. 41). Benedict XVI emphasizes that "the image of the Last Judgment is not primarily an image of terror but an image of hope." Even though it is also "an image that evokes responsibility," it remains an image of hope, even "the decisive image of hope" (No. 44).

In making his case for recognizing the splendor of hope to be found in "the image of the Last Judgment," the pope engages in a fascinating dialogue with two great Jewish philosophers and sociologists of the Frankfurt School: Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Theodor Adorno (1903-69). They insisted that the horrible injustices of history should not have the final word. There must finally be justice. But that, in the words the pope quotes from Adorno, would require a world "where not only present suffering would be wiped out, but also that which is irrevocably past would be undone." Yet this would mean, the pope points out, something foreign to the thought of Adorno: the resurrection of the dead (No. 42).

There will be, the pope declares, "an undoing of past suffering, a reparation that sets things right." "For this reason," he adds, "faith in the Last Judgment is first and foremost hope." Personally he is convinced that "the question of justice constitutes...the strongest argument in favor of faith in eternal life." It is only because "the injustice of history" cannot be "the final word" that "the necessity for Christ's return and for new life become fully convincing" (No. 43). Hence he can state firmly: "God is justice and creates justice. This is our consolation and our hope" (No. 44).

The encyclical ends with a touching address to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the "Star of Hope" (No. 50). Here Pope Benedict follows a practice of his predecessor, who often closed his official texts with a prayer to the Virgin Mary. I found Benedict's prayer even more effective than those of John Paul II. In an affectionate and touching way, it follows the journey of hope that was the life of Mary.

This encyclical remains in steady dialogue with the modern world in all its technological progress, dreadful upheavals and material hopes. The pope recognizes, for instance, how at one level "the laws of matter and of evolution" govern the world. But they do not "have the final say." That belongs to the personal, loving God who governs the universe (No. 5).

The pope recalls the progress signaled by "the discovery of America and the new technical achievements" encouraged by

the thought of Francis Bacon (1561-1626). "He even put forward a vision of foreseeable inventions—including the airplane and the submarine" (No. 17). Reason and freedom fueled faith in progress and hope for a new Jerusalem that progress might bring in this world. After the French Revolution, "the 19th century held to its faith in progress as the new form of human hope" (No. 20). Marx and Engels envisaged the proletarian revolution, which came "in the most radical way in Russia." The supposedly "interim phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat" did not usher in "a perfect world" but left behind "a trail of appalling destruction" (No. 21).

As Adorno warned dramatically, "progress, seen accurately, is progress from sling to the atom bomb." The pope cites these words to illustrate "the ambiguity of progress." Unquestionably "it offers new possibilities for good, but it also opens up appalling possibilities for evil—possibilities that formerly did not exist." In words that echo Albert Einstein, he warns: "If technical progress is not matched by corresponding progress" in the "ethical formation" of human beings, "then it is not progress at all, but a threat" for humanity and the world (No. 22).

We cannot simply "be redeemed through science. Such an expectation asks too much of science." To be sure, "science can contribute greatly to making the world" more human. Yet "it can also destroy" the human race and the world, "unless it is steered by forces that lie outside it" (No. 25). Without opening themselves to truth, love and what is good and making "a right use of creation which comes to us as a gift," human beings can destroy "the present and the future" (No. 35).

Pope Benedict sums up the dramatic state of the human race. While there is "incremental progress" in the material sphere, a "continuous progress towards an ever greater mastery of nature," on the other hand human freedom "is always new," and "decisions can never simply be made for us in advance by others." In "fundamental decisions, every person and every generation is a new beginning." New generations "can build on the knowledge and experience of those who went before, and they can draw on the moral treasury of the whole of humanity. But

they can also reject it."

In developing his encyclical, the pope draws on a rich variety of sources and examples. After an opening section on the teaching of the New Testament, he moves to the heroic life of the Sudanese saint Josephine Bakhita. Born in Darfur, she was kidnapped at the age of 9, sold five times in slave-markets and flogged repeatedly. Bought by an Italian merchant, she was taken to Italy, set free and received into the Catholic Church by the Patriarch of Venice. As a Canossian sister, she set herself to extend to others the "liberation" and hope she "had received through her encounter with the God of Jesus Christ" (No. 3).

The pope cites from the tradition such major voices as Ambrose of Milan, Maximus the Confessor, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas and Henri de Lubac (but not his friend, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who combined a Christ-centered hope with a profound sense of evolutionary progress toward the final future). He repeatedly uses texts from Augustine of Hippo to illuminate the theory and practice of Christian hope. Augustine and other church fathers understood 1 Cor 3:12-15 to express a fiery judgment facing every individual and became a classic passage supporting the function of Purgatory (No. 46). This interpretation, however, went beyond what Paul himself had in mind: the judgment that missionary preachers would experience.

Pope Benedict draws from two essays of Immanuel Kant to exemplify this great philosopher's disillusionment as the progress promised by the French Revolution lapsed into violence and terror (No. 19), and from Plato's *Gorgias* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* to illustrate the meaning of final justice (No. 44). In highlighting "the innumerable interactions" that link the lives of all people, the pope echoes John Donne: "No man is an island" (No. 48).

Commentary

Even more than in *God Is Love*, this second encyclical cites a rich range of witnesses from beyond the Catholic tradition. The pope's respect for Adorno, Bacon, Dostoevsky, Horkheimer, Kant and Plato sets the encyclical in a broad context of human thought and culture. *Saved by Hope* reads seamlessly, unlike *God Is Love*, of which the first part came from Pope Benedict himself while the second part is reworked themes on charity and justice inherited from his papal predecessor. John Paul II broke new ground in papal teaching by considering repeatedly and at length the question of human and Christian suffering. *Saved by Hope* also takes up the theme of suffering and its possible meaning.

Like Ratzinger's 1977 book, this encyclical draws on Adorno's thought in maintaining justice through the resurrection of the dead and reflects on an "intermediate state" of purification after death. But unlike that book, it neither develops a theology of death nor attends to the precise theme of the immortality of the soul.

For all its richness, Pope Benedict's second encyclical does not include everything one might expect. It does not invoke the Second Vatican Council, which concluded by issuing as its longest document, *Gaudium et Spes* ("Joy and Hope") and declaring, "The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping." Nor does the encyclical mention the Holy Spirit, whose powerful presence works to bring all things to final salvation (Rom 8:23).

Nevertheless, Pope Benedict has published a timely and welcome appeal to us to renew our life of hope. May his new encyclical give much light and encouragement to the church and the world. A

Poem

St. Vincent

"The best way to know God is to love many things."
–Vincent Van Gogh

What Vincent loved of sky he told the crows.
He taught them blue and the long note of want,
the rut and whorl of time that comes and goes,
God's face in the field, drawn and gaunt.
What Vincent loved of earth he told the trees.
Their branches writhed like flames when they heard
how every leaf and bole at last is seized
and falls like olive stones and evening birds.
What Vincent loved of salt he told the sea:
the play and savor of the friends of Christ,
their sails taut, each mast a wood-crossed T,
the empty boats afloat on waves of light.
What Vincent loved of fire he told the fire,
then placed his wounded hand upon the pyre.

Angela O'Donnell

ANGELA O'DONNELL, a professor of literature at Fordham University, is at work on a poetic series of saints' lives. Her book-length collection of poems, *Moving House*, will be published by Word Press in 2009.

Boston's Labor Priest

Remembering Edward F. Boyle

BY JOSEPH J. FAHEY AND THOMAS A. KOCHAN

LAST NOVEMBER, leaders in Boston's labor-management community gathered for the annual Cushing-Gavin Awards dinner. The "neutral" award went to Edward Boyle, S.J., a priest who for the past 37 years served as executive secretary of the archdiocese's 1,200-member Labor Guild. Boyle died of cancer on Nov. 13 at the age of 76, just two weeks before the dinner. The award, which honors his service, will hereafter bear his name.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH J. FAHEY

Cardinal Richard Cushing created the Labor Guild in 1946 to educate Catholic workers about their rights and responsibilities. Today it operates a school of industrial relations that offers such courses as labor law, collective bargaining, steward training, union governance and parliamentary procedure. The guild provides an important venue for collective bargaining, arbitration and union elections. Under Boyle's leadership, it became a moral voice for labor-management relations, providing opportunities for the leaders to build close personal relationships and explore ways to work on shared problems.

Boyle was one of the last in a long tradition of Jesuit labor priests, just as the Labor Guild is the only institution of its kind left in the nation. To the end of his life, Boyle argued with conviction that the Guild is needed more today than ever. In his last Mass, televised on the Sunday before Labor Day, he said: "The labor market climate in almost all sectors continues to deteriorate; the gap between worker and manager, between rich and poor, threatens the very moral foundation of our society." Boyle explained that "our economic system has lost its moral compass" and needs to be redirected to serve the interests of all, not just those at the top of the economic ladder. "The only valid opposition," he said, "must be a moral one grounded in God and God's will."

In his final months, Boyle led the board in developing a new vision of the Guild's role, grounded in the best Catholic social teachings and updated to reflect the critical problems facing workers, employers and the economy today. It calls for greater efforts on behalf of immigrants and other low-wage workers; extended use of media to broadcast the moral issues at stake in debates over worker rights and the responsibilities of unions, management and government; and engaging people of all faiths and traditions in efforts to achieve workplace justice, harmony and efficiency.

Edward Boyle took an unusual path to the priesthood. He attended public schools in Belmont, Mass., went to Dartmouth College on an R.O.T.C. scholarship and received a degree in economics. He served as a U.S. naval officer for three years, pursued an M.B.A. and worked in finance with Seatrain Lines in New York City. He said it did not take him long to realize something was missing: "I was going down the wrong path at 100 miles an hour," pursuing a life in which "money and winning are everything." After attending several retreats conducted by Jesuits, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1958. Boyle appreciated being exposed to a "whole new world of the lives of the saints"; he encountered the pioneering social justice work of several diocesan priests—Msgr. John A. Ryan, Msgr. George G. Higgins and Msgr. John J. Egan—and the Jesuits Philip A. Carey, Leo C. Brown and Philip S. Land. Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement inspired him.

While studying philosophy and theology at the Jesuit seminary in Weston, Mass., Boyle met Mortimer H. Gavin, S.J., a chaplain to the Labor Guild from 1961 to 1984. Boyle offered to help. Following his ordination in 1969 and a year of teaching high school, Boyle started his own ministry at the Guild, attracted to its mission: to promote the "dignity of the individual person/worker as the cornerstone of a just economic system" through "democratic trade unionism" and collective bargaining.

Greg Thornton, senior vice president for employee relations and operations of The Boston Globe, says of Boyle: "Father

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Ed encouraged collective bargaining among guild labor and management members to be conducted in a dignified and civil environment that has often been lost or absent in other parts of the country. His example and standards will be sorely missed."

In one of his last conversations, Father Ed said: "I have three families: my flesh and blood family; my Jesuit religious community and the Guild family." All three mourn the loss and celebrate the life of this holy, humble and remarkable man. Boyle's work will continue; he would have it no other way. A

Norms, Reforms

The Battle for Rights in the United States Catholic Church

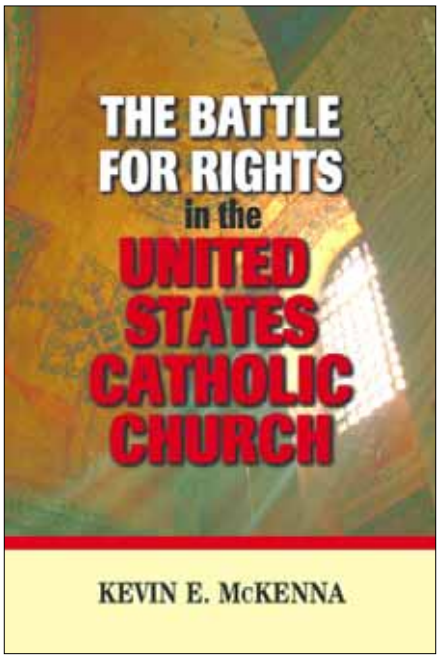
By Kevin E. McKenna

Paulist Press. 195p $19.95 (paperback)
ISBN 9780809144938

At the height of the sexual abuse crisis in Boston, Cardinal Bernard Law claimed that canon law had prevented him from taking action to protect victims. Victims responded: "Canon law was irrelevant to us. Children were being abused. Sexual predators were being protected" (The Boston Globe, July 7, 2002). A recent comment in **America** (11/26/07) suggested that "the canonical processes intended to prevent hasty judgments may fail both the victims and religious superiors when they try to act responsibly." One might surmise from his monograph, *The Battle for Rights in the United States Catholic Church*, that Kevin E. McKenna would contend that the cardinal, the victims and the editors of **America** are all mistaken about canon law.

Having served as president of the Canon Law Society of America at the time of the adoption of the 2002 Dallas norms for the protection of children from sexual abuse by church personnel, McKenna begins his book by noting that Rome rejected the first version of the hastily framed 2002 Dallas norms. Although he leads with a critical tone about the norms, McKenna focuses upon neither the bishops' action at the start of the 21st century nor the sad events of the sexual abuse crisis, most of which occurred at least several decades earlier during the 20th century. Rather, he tells a story about the battle for canonical rights in the United States Catholic Church during the 19th century. The heroes of McKenna's narrative are James McMaster, Eugene O'Callaghan, Richard Burstell, Peter A. Baart and Patrick Corrigan.

For 40 years during the second half of the 19th century, McMaster, a layman influenced by the Oxford movement, published The Freeman's Journal and The Catholic Register, which was "the most widely read Catholic newspaper in the country." McMaster used this national forum to lament the inapplicability of canon law in the United States due to the country's missionary status. Eugene O'Callaghan, a parish priest in Ohio, employed a nom de plume in The Freeman's Journal and The Catholic



Register. He complained that certain bishops were exploiting the missionary status of the United States to avoid establishing proper parishes with permanent pastors, who pursuant to canon law would have enjoyed certain rights and responsibilities. McMaster, O'Callaghan and others sought to bring their concerns to the First Vatican Council. According to McKenna, some American bishops at the council blocked the endeavor.

Burstell, a priest and expert in canon law in New York City during the post-Civil War period, joined fellow priests like Edward McGlynn in advocating an Americanism that called for the adoption of democratic principles by the church. When New York's Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan disciplined McGlynn by removing him from his parish and imposing the penalty of excommunication for his strong support of a socialist candidate, Burstell rose to his defense. In response to Burstell's advocacy, Corrigan deprived him of his offices as Defender of the Bond and founding pastor of Epiphany Parish on the East side of Manhattan and transferred him to a rural parish upstate.

In the Midwest, Baart defended Dominic Kolasinski, a Polish-born priest ministering in Detroit who was at the center of an intra-parish conflict with tragic consequences. Spanning the years from 1885 to 1897, the conflict included the issue of trusteeism, allegations of sexual impropriety by Kolasinski with adult women, questions over financial accountability, intractable disagreement between rival Polish factions of the parish community and a parish riot that resulted in the death of one of the rioting parishioners. Baart appealed the bishop's sanctions against Kolasinski on the grounds that the sanctions were imposed without a hearing and that the charges had never been proven.

The final figure of McKenna's parade of 19th-century personages, Patrick Corrigan, a priest of the Diocese of Newark, N.J., criticized the lack of accountability in the handling of diocesan property and the methods for the selection of bishops in the United States. In a series of books and pamphlets, Corrigan favored the application of more democratic principles to ecclesiastical government and also advocated the appointment of an apostolic delegate to the United States. In 1893, Pope Leo XIII appointed Archbishop Francesco Satolli as the first apostolic delegate. Satolli not only facilitated the reconciliation of Kolasinski, but he also lifted the excommunication imposed on McGlynn.

The Battle for Rights also includes an early chapter that traces the history of clerical crimes and punishments from the ancient church to the Council of Trent in the 16th century. The book is well organized and an easy read. I mentioned at the outset that one might surmise McKenna labored to produce this work in order to demonstrate the importance of canon law

The Reviewers

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in protecting the rights of all persons involved in cases of clergy sexual abuse of minors. Approaching the conclusion of the book, I anticipated a final chapter that applied the lessons of 19th-century history to the national crisis over the handling of sexual abuse cases by ecclesiastical authorities during the second half of the 20th century.

The historical evidence culled by McKenna remains open to at least several different interpretations. From a positive perspective, the 19th century affirms the vital function that canon law plays in the life of the church. In other words, a balanced application of the relevant substantive and procedural provisions in canon law to cases of sexual abuse by clergy would have offered some justice to victims while protecting the rights of the accused. Such a balanced application would also have served the interest of the church both *ad intra*—by maintaining a just ecclesiastical order—and *ad extra*—by conveying confidence in the juridical structure of the institutional church.

A less positive alternative interpretation of this historical evidence might be that the more recent disregard of canon law and parties' fundamental rights is consistent with the 19th century's episcopal antinomianism. Whatever interpretation one might attribute to the historical evidence, McKenna does not fulfill the reader's expectation for an integration of the historical material with the contemporary situation.

Still, Kevin McKenna has contributed to the understanding of the contemporary crisis in the church by offering an important historical context from which the crisis might be considered.

John J. Coughlin

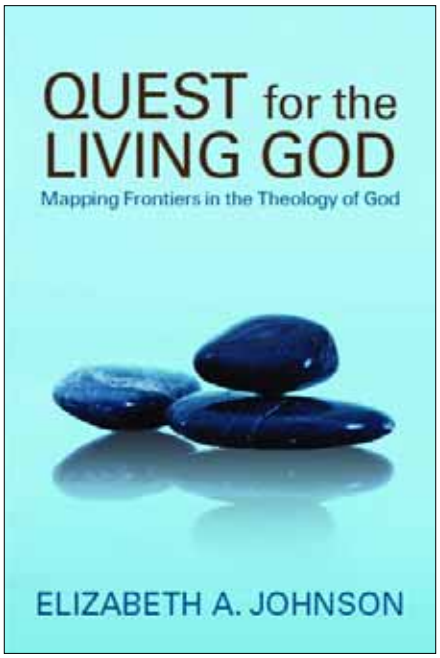
'Ever Ancient, Ever New'

Quest for the Living God

Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God

By Elizabeth A. Johnson
Continuum. 234p $24.95
ISBN 9780826417701

Elizabeth Johnson's theological talent has flourished in many ways, much to the benefit of the academy and the church. She is one of the co-creators of a modern theological genre, feminist theology; and her contributions to this genre, one of the most exciting developments in the history of theology, have enriched the faith of a generation of believers. Her feminist interpretation of the Trinitarian God, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (1992), is a tour de force that will endure in the Catholic tradition as a theological classic. Her feminist reconstruction of the communion of saints in *Friends of God and Prophets* (1998) and her efforts to recover the historical mother of Jesus, Miriam of Nazareth, in *Truly Our Sister* (2003), have applied the insights of feminist criticism to specifically Catholic beliefs and doctrines thoroughly engulfed in patriarchal assumptions. It is a great act of generosity, then, that such an accomplished scholar would pause in her career-long project to share with us her considerable gifts as a teacher, as she does in her new book.



Quest for the Living God is an invitation to its readers to explore some of our best contemporary reflections on the experience of God and topics surrounding the doctrine of God. Written in clear and accessible prose, the book avoids the technical language that peppers scholarly works intended for a professional audience, and takes pains to guide a theologically inexperienced reader through all the issues that inform a particular interpretive concern. The book consists of 10 chapters: "Ancient Story, New Chapter," an orientation to the task of theological interpretation; "Gracious Mystery, Ever Greater, Ever Nearer," on the work of Karl Rahner; "The Crucified God of Compassion," on God's relation to evil in the work of Jürgen Moltmann, Dorothee Soelle and Johann Baptist Metz; "Liberating God of Life," on Latin American liberation theology; "God Acting Womanish," on feminist theology; "God Who Breaks Chains," on black liberation and womanist theologies; "Accompanying God of *Fiesta*," on Latino/a theologies; "Generous God of the Religions," on claims for the workings of divine providence in world religions; "Creator Spirit in the Evolving World," on God in the perspectives of the natural sciences and ecology; and "Trinity: The Living God of Love," on efforts across the tradition to capture the emotional resonance of belief in the triune God.

Each chapter begins by situating the theological theme under consideration in the broader cultural situation to which it was a response. Thus, Johnson begins the chapter on Latin American liberation theology by explaining the facts of third world poverty, and the chapter on black liberation and womanist theologies by presenting the facts of endemic racism in American society. As first threads woven into the fabric of each chapter, they offer background and context for the nuances and problems of each theology of God. Were these introductions read collectively (and artificially) on their own, they would offer a valuable survey of contemporary culture at large. Placed as they are amid the many interpretive stories Johnson tells, they allow the reader to appreciate the challenge, art and truth of theological reflection. Each chapter ends with an expository bibliography that provides direction for further reading.

I found every one of these chapters to be an engaging tour of our best theological thinking on God. And even though I have read nearly all the authors whom Johnson enlists as her conversation partners, I learned much from the imaginative ways she gave voice to their motivations, hopes and commitments. Karl Rahner has always exerted a strong influence on

Johnson's thought, so I was not surprised by her especially accomplished, and even moving, presentation of his theology of divine mystery. The chapter on feminist theology is the finest brief account of its concerns that I have ever read.

Of course a book like this, for reasons of length alone, cannot do everything. The author must make choices. I cannot see how one could fault Johnson for the choices that she made, though I can imagine a reader dissatisfied by some omissions. There is, for example, no discussion of the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Orthodox theology or process theology (except for a mention). These exclusions may simply reflect Johnson's interests, or lack thereof. If she made her own theological passions the criteria of her choice of material, then the reader must judge whether her passions extend far enough to make this a satisfying book. My hope for broader inclusion was motivated by a desire to see her skills in explanation and analysis brought to bear on more theology.

It is rare that one finds a book that will appeal to all sorts of audiences, but *Quest for the Living God* is one. Professional theologians, undergraduate students and literate people of faith will enjoy all that this engaging work has to offer.

John E. Thiel

Remembering Anna

Circling My Mother

A Memoir

By Mary Gordon

Pantheon. 272p $24

ISBN 9780375424564

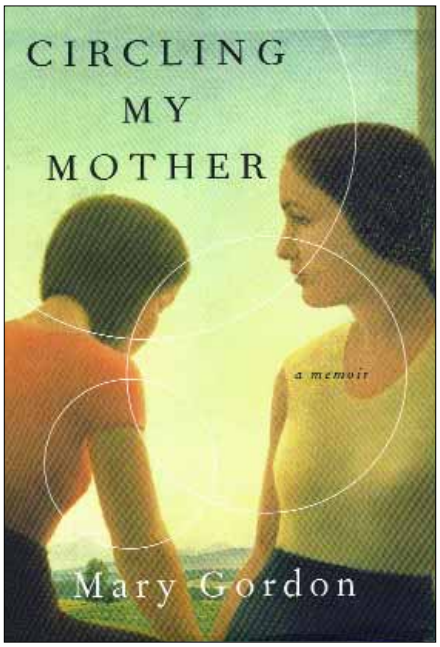
After achieving critical acclaim over several decades for her short stories and novels, Mary Gordon found artistic success in a new literary form with her 1996 memoir, *The Shadow Man: A Daughter's Search for Her Father*. More than a decade after that searing portrait of a daughter discombobulated by the discovery of her father's hidden past and his lifelong deceptions, Gordon now rounds out the portrait of her parents with a similarly take-no-prisoners emotional approach in her remarkable new memoir, *Circling My Mother*.

In these 10 essays (some of which were published previously in Harper's, The American Scholar and Salmagundi), Gordon revisits topics familiar to any reader of her work over the years, including art, aesthetics, religion and her friendships and encounters with Catholic priests, as well as the larger themes of the primacy of memory and the poignancy of loss. In the process, she paints a moving portrait of her mother, Anna, a troubled but admirable woman whose struggles became clear to Gordon only in the remembrance and the retelling.

"Happy families are all alike," Tolstoy wrote in *Anna Karenina*, but "every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Indeed, a certain strange pride in the dysfunction of one's childhood is a common enough trope in memoir, but Gordon does not wallow in the difficulties she faced as a child; instead, she evokes memories of her life with her mother largely to demonstrate the unique circumstances that formed her own character as well as that of her mother. In Gordon's case, her father's eccentricities and sudden

death when she was 7 thrust her mother into a position of almost complete dominance in her upbringing, coloring all her memories of her childhood. Crippled by polio (and later by alcoholism), her mother comes across as a stubbornly unyielding figure who by sheer force of personality extracted from the world much that it was unwilling to give and toiled without complaint to provide for her daughter.

Despite the deeply personal subject matter and obvious level of devotion to her mother found throughout the book, Gordon is rarely sentimental or saccharine in her treatment of complicated and painful issues. In fact, she is often the contrary, offering unsparing analyses and nonsense reflections on familial cruelty, alcoholism, the excesses of youth and even the rampant dysfunction she now sees in her parents' marriage. "They never should have married," she notes, a shocking statement that requires serious emotional distancing from the subject matter. While the rhetorical effect is to give Gordon enormous credibility as a narrator, this approach can also come off as dispassionate, as it does when Gordon describes her



mother's physical appearance in language never euphemistic and often blunt, calling her "distressful to look at, perhaps even grotesque."

Like almost all of Gordon's work, *Circling My Mother* is deeply religious, shot through with Gordon's constant grappling with her nuanced relationship with the Catholicism to which her father converted and which, she claims, her mother never questioned. The priests who have played such a large role in Gordon's fiction are also present here, as her mother's friends, pets, spiritual confidants and allies against the world. Her mother's life spanned an era when, Gordon notes, priests were often the "rare men at that time who took seriously a woman's inner life." These figures have individual qualities that an ambitious reader might recognize in Gordon's fictional priests from such works as *The Company of Women* or *Final Payments*, men whose approach to the world included a Hazel Motes-like moral certainty but also a secular glamour of manicured hands and sports cars and hard drinks. Her mother, Gordon writes, would find it impossible to believe that many people associate Catholic priests these days with moral scandal; unlike her daughter, she remained throughout her life deliberately blind to their foibles and failings. In fact, it is her mother's alcohol-fueled profanity directed at a priest that finally convinces Gordon that in her later years her mother has lost everything she held dear.

Ultimately, *Circling My Mother* is a task of interpretation and of reinterpretation, Gordon's intensely personal and yet public attempt to come to terms with the complicated, confusing, difficult person who defined so much of her own life but slowly vanished into a fog of dementia and eventually a merciful death. Both in structure and in tone, *Circling My Mother* forces the reader toward deeper and deeper understanding of Gordon and her mother. Paradoxically, as her mother departs slowly from life, for the reader she becomes more and more alive in the very act of Gordon's writing and retelling. "She has become my words," Gordon writes in the closing chapter, "or dust. Both. How is it possible to comprehend this?"

James T. Keane

Classifieds

Bound Volumes

AMERICA PRESS INC. is looking to acquire a set of bound volumes of **America** for a digital scanning project. A complete set is preferred, but partial sets are also acceptable. In return for the volumes, America Press will provide a searchable CD or DVD set with the full contents of the magazine from 1909 until the present. For more information contact Tim Reidy at reidy@americamagazine.org, or Ph: (212) 515-0111.

Pilgrimages

TWO PILGRIMAGES exploring the Celtic tradition. Scotland: April 13-24, 2008; or Ireland: June 26-July 6, 2008. Contact: Jane Comerford, Ph: (509) 868-1683; email: pilgrimages@earthlink.net.

Positions

CHAIR OF THE THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT. The theology department at Assumption College seeks a Catholic theologian to assume the position of Chair of the department. The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated record of excellence in teaching and scholarship as well as experience as an administrator and must possess a degree in theology. The department seeks to make a senior-level appointment, preferably at the rank of full professor. Candidates must demonstrate leadership in promoting the Catholic and ecumenical mission of the College. The theology department consists of 13 members, some of whom teach part time and some who are Assumptionist priests. Theology courses play a central role in the core curriculum. Experience in developing curriculum, budget management and scheduling is helpful. The department prefers candidates whose area of specialty is systematic theology. A secondary field in Old Testament is desirable. Applicants must actively contribute to the mission of Assumption College and respect the Catholic and Assumptionist identity of the College.

The Chair reports to the Dean of the College. Assumption College, a Catholic liberal arts and professional studies college, was founded in 1904 by its sponsoring religious community, the Augustinians of the Assumption. Assumption College is part of the Colleges of Worcester Consortium and an affirmative action employer, encouraging candidates who would enrich the College's diversity. Interested candidates should send a letter of interest, C.V. and three letters of recommendation to: Grace Blunt, Esq., Director of Human Resources, Assumption College, 500 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609. The deadline for applications has been extended to Feb. 1, 2008.

CHANCELLOR: This full-time position is responsible for general administration and oversight of the Pastoral Center. The Chancellor has direct responsibility for archives, personnel and finance. Administrative and consultative leadership skills a must. Focused and strategic planning qualities critical to organizational development and personnel management throughout the Diocese of Las Cruces. Team player, people oriented, computer literate and Roman Catholic. Bilingual (English/Spanish) preferred but not required. This is a position appointed by the Bishop. The position will be available March 1, 2008, although this is negotiable. Please contact Elizabeth Grinnell at (575) 523-7577 to express interest in this position.

DIRECTOR OF HISPANIC MINISTRY. The Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, is seeking a Director of Hispanic Ministry. Candidates must be fully bilingual (Spanish/English), comfortable in both cultures, collaborate with local parish leadership and advocate for full inclusion of Hispanics in parishes. Responsibilities include: advocacy and direct services (Clinic); providing resources for education, formation and small faith communities; collaborating with Hispanic communities, pastoral leadership, diocesan directors, social service agencies and other organizations providing services to the Hispanic community.

Candidate must be a practicing Catholic committed to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church, possess a M.A. degree in religious or pastoral studies or equivalent; have three to five years of diocesan or parish experience; be able to drive the 19-county area of the Diocese of Toledo; be able to work flexible hours.

This position provides you the opportunity to grow in ministry with the Hispanic community. Please respond with résumé, cover letter and salary expectations by Feb. 20, 2008, to: Human Resources, Catholic Diocese of Toledo, P.O. Box 985, Toledo, OH 43697-0985. You may also send résumés by e-mail to rcoutts@toledodiocese.org.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Frisco, Tex., seeks a Director of Religious Education for our Faith Formation program from pre-K through all facets of adult education. A master's degree in religious education or related field preferred. Bilingual a plus. Qualified candidates should send a résumé and letter of interest by e-mail to David Utsler: dutsler@stfoafrisco.org.

DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY MINISTRY. At Regis University the Office of University Ministry serves students/faculty/staff of Roman Catholic and other faith traditions through liturgies, retreats, pastoral presence and faith and justice programming. The Director has day-to-day supervisory responsibility for all University ministry programs and personnel and reports to the Vice President for Mission. The director also oversees and maintains relationships with key University, regional and national entities and serves as a key spokesperson for the University on matters of Catholic identity and mission.

Requirements: The Director must be a Roman Catholic, with a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited institution in a related field such as pastoral ministry or counseling, divinity, theology or liturgy. He/she should have significant experience in progressively responsible positions in campus ministry, preferably in a Catholic college or university, with demonstrated experience in planning, program development and staff supervision. Experience in Jesuit higher education and knowledge of Ignatian spirituality strongly preferred.

Application process: To apply for this position, please complete an online application at https://jobs.regis.edu and apply directly to the posting by attaching résumé/curriculum vitae, cover letter and the names and contact information for three references. Applicants are encouraged to apply by Feb. 29, 2008. If preferred, application materials may be mailed to: Regis University, Mission Department, Mail Code E-27, 3333 Regis Boulevard, Denver, CO 80221.

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY sought for active college-town parish with growing Latino population. Successful candidate will have B.A. or M.A. with theological course work; experience in youth ministry, in Lectionary-based catechesis and in "Renewing the Vision"; strong leadership and communication skills. Parish is integrating stewardship into all programs, including Youth Ministry. D.Y.M. is directly responsible for continuing to create a prayerful and dynamic environment for youth in grades 9-12 by working with faith development team—Junior Youth Minister (grades 6-8), adult faith formation, staff, catechists and parents. Should want to set standard for such ministries. Competitive salary and benefits. Contact D.Y.M. Search Committee, St. Thomas More Catholic Church, 940 Carmichael Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 by Jan. 28 for position available immediately.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS MINISTRY. The Office of Campus Ministry at Georgetown University, the nation's oldest Catholic and Jesuit institution of higher learning, serves both Roman Catholic students, faculty and staff, and students, faculty and staff of other faith traditions. The Campus Ministry staff includes Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox Christian chaplains, and they support various affiliated ministries and student groups representing a variety of other religious traditions as well. The Executive Director of Campus Ministry reports to the Vice President for Mission and Ministry and works with the Vice President and other University officials to promote the Catholic and Jesuit character of the University and its values. The Executive Director also has day-to-day supervisory responsibility for all campus ministry programs and personnel throughout the University, including law and medical school campuses.

The Executive Director of Campus Ministry is expected to guide the department in its efforts to help students integrate their intellectual lives with their spiritual development and service to others. The Executive Director also is expected to foster ecumenical and interreligious understanding and coordinate interfaith activities among students on campus.

The Executive Director of Campus Ministry is responsible for implementing programs and activities on all three campuses to involve students, faculty and staff in fostering the religious life of the University. The Executive Director will also serve as a resource for and liaison with academic and student affairs programs that promote the Catholic and Jesuit nature of the University and will assist the Vice President and others with the collaborative development of new programs in these areas. Consequently, it is necessary that the Executive Director have a strong knowledge of and deep identification with Roman Catholicism.

Under the supervision of the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, the Executive Director of Campus Ministry will oversee departmental administration, staffing and policies, including the development, presentation and management of the annual operating budget. Campus Ministry includes 23 full-time staff, 6 part-time staff, 21 volunteer Chaplains-in-Residence, and various affiliated ministries. The net budget is over $1.8 million, with additional endowment funds for specific projects. On occasion the Executive Director of Campus Ministry may be involved in development activities with the Vice President, but development will not be a primary responsibility.

The ideal candidate for Executive Director of Campus Ministry will be inspiring, creative, effective and principled, with an in-depth understanding of and personal commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit character of Georgetown and Ignatian spirituality. Other general responsibilities of the office and qualities and abilities preferred in candidates for the office include, but are not limited to:

• Helping to sustain and strengthen the University's strong Catholic and Jesuit identity, appreciating the pastoral and spiritual leadership required in this role, supporting the liturgical life of the campus and furthering the University's service to the church, particularly in the area of social justice;

• Working closely with the Vice President for Mission and Ministry and other senior administrators to foster and sustain a sense of community, shared purpose and collaboration among the University's diverse faculty, staff and students;

• Possessing proven management skills for the formulation and implementation of short- and long-term plans in an ecumenical and interreligious context.

It is preferable that the Executive Director of Campus Ministry possess a Ph.D. or D.Min. or equivalent, significant leadership in campus ministry and proven managerial skills within a pastoral setting. Compensation for this position is competitive with similar positions at other private research universities.

Applications should be submitted through the University's human resources Web site at http://hr.georgetown.edu (Job no. 2007-1215D). Other inquiries regarding the position may be directed to Aaron Johnson, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, at

(202) 687-1395 or missionandministry@georgetown.edu.

Qualified candidates are asked to submit a letter of interest, a current curriculum vitae and a list of four references. Completed applications will be reviewed immediately. Applicants are encouraged to submit their credentials before Feb. 29, 2008. The preferred starting date is June 16, 2008.

Georgetown University is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer.

HISPANIC MINISTRY DIRECTOR. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church is a rapidly growing parish in Frisco, Tex., with a large and vital Spanish-speaking community. We seek a director to oversee all aspects of Hispanic ministry in the parish. A qualified candidate must be bilingual and bicultural and possess a degree and/or experience relevant to pastoral ministry. Send a résumé and letter of interest by e-mail to David Utsler: dutsler@stfoafrisco.org.

MUSIC DIRECTOR. Do you have the love of God in your heart? Do you desire to be a part of a parish community that strives to help people worship through excellent liturgy, prayer, music and song? Then think about being a part of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church! We are a vibrant and growing parish of 2,000 families, seeking a full-time music director who has a thorough understanding and appreciation of Catholic liturgy. Close to beach and Naples Philharmonic. Requirements include: minimum of B.A. in music, along with excellent organ, keyboard and vocal skills. Responsibilities include: planning and preparation for six weekend liturgies, holy days, weddings and funerals; and training, directing and scheduling of choirs and cantors. Salary and benefits are commensurate with education and experience. Please send résumé as soon as possible to: St. Leo Catholic Church, Music Director Search Committee, 28290 Beaumont Rd., Bonita Springs, FL 34134; Fax (239) 992-5282; e-mail: stleoliturgy@yahoo.com.

PRESIDENT. Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory, a Catholic and Marianist co-ed school founded in 1960, is seeking a highly qualified candidate to serve as its next President beginning July 1, 2008. As the Chief Executive Officer of C-M, the ideal candidate should be a practicing Catholic in good standing; have five to seven years experience in teaching and school administration; and three to five years' experience in successful fundraising, admissions, finance, budgeting and construction. As the chief spokesperson for the school, the candidate should possess outstanding written and verbal skills to articulate the mission and the Marianist charism to all its constituents in a compelling and convincing way. By Jan. 30, 2008, please send résumé and philosophy of education to: Search Committee, c/o Joanne Bolooki, Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory, 500 E. Chaminade Drive, Hollywood, FL 33021; e-mail: jbolooki@cmlions.org.

PROGRAM ADVISOR AND CHAPLAIN. Catholic Relief Services has a position open for a full-time program advisor and chaplain within their U.S. Operations Support Department. The Global Fellows Program Advisor is responsible for managing the recruitment process and scheduling of priests and deacons with parishes for the Global Fellows program, as well as seeking strategic improvements to these processes to support the growth of this valuable program. In addition, this position also serves as chaplain at C.R.S. headquarters, presiding at weekly Masses and assisting with visiting prelates. Only applications submitted through www.crs.org/about/careers can be considered. Regrettably, no phone calls or e-mail can be accepted.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY DIRECTOR sought by the Catholic Diocese of Erie. The Director's primary responsibility is to support the evangelization and catechesis of youth and young adults in the Diocese. The Director collaborates with a team of other trained professional ministers in religious education and the Catholic schools of the Diocese. The Director reports to the Vicar for Education and enjoys significant interaction with and support from the Bishop. Review of applications will begin immediately. For best consideration, interested applicants should apply before Feb. 15, 2008. For a detailed job description and application procedures, please go to www.erier-cd.org/youth.asp.

Retreats

BETHANY RETREAT HOUSE, East Chicago, Ind., offers private and individually directed silent retreats, including Ignatian 30 days, year-round in a prayerful home setting. Contact Joyce Diltz, P.H.J.C.: (219) 398-5047; bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net; www.bethanyretreathouse.org.

BETHANY SPIRITUALITY CENTER, N.Y., announces the following spring/summer 2008 retreats: "Aging With Grace," with Barbara Metz, S.N.D., and John Burchill, O.P., April 20-25; "Justice Through the Window of God's Word," with Mark Hallinan, S.J., June 5-8; "Forgiving Love: In the Word, In the World," with Janice Farnham, R.J.M., and Rosemary Mangan, R.J.M., June 8-14; "Twelve Steps to Inner Freedom; Humility Revisited," with Carolyn Gorny-Kopkowski, O.S.B., June 16-22; Eight-day directed retreats, July 1-9, 12-20 and 23-31; Retiro Predicado, Aug. 3-10; and Vipassana Retreat, with Kevin Culligan, O.C.D., and Mary Jo Meadows, O.C.D.S., Aug. 15-24. Convenient Hudson Valley location, near N.Y.C. For details, visit www.bethanyspiritualitycenter.org, or call (845) 460-3061.

Vocations

DESIRE PRIESTHOOD? Religious life? Lay ministries? Enriching sabbatical? Vocation discernment retreat? Ph: (907) 339-2486. Web: www.gonzaga.edu/ministryinstitute.

Volunteers

FRANCISCAN COVENANT PROGRAM seeks full-time mature Catholic volunteers to live, pray and work in community with Franciscan Friars at retreat houses and missions in California. Ministries include hospitality, maintenance, bookkeeping, administration, gardening and serving the poor. One year renewable. Under 67, healthy, married or single. Contact: (760) 757-3651, ext. 173 or covprg@yahoo.com.

Wills

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Faithful Citizens

"A Future Without Parish Schools," by Terry Golway, (12/10) raises a crucially important issue for the future of catechesis in the Catholic Church in the United States. Catholic parish schools have been an extremely important factor in providing for the catechesis of Catholic children.

I am surprised that the article did not refer to the hundreds of catechetical and youth ministry programs across the United States led by well-educated directors of faith formation and youth ministers and staffed by dedicated, certified and creative catechists and youth ministers, serving thousands of Catholic children and youth.

The integration of service involvement and fellowship interaction with systematic catechetical formation has been an intentional and comprehensive element of these programs for over 20 years.

Leaders at all levels of the church in the United States need to pay careful attention to the issue Terry Golway has raised and provide for significantly increased funding for the education and formation of catechetical and youth ministry leaders to ensure the expansion and continual improvement of parish programs for children and youth.

An even more important question is whether the Catholic Church will seriously expand its efforts (staffing and funding) for the continuing faith formation of Catholic adults. The home already has a pervasive influence on how the Catholic faith is shared with our younger members. Parents and other adult family members will have increasing impact (for good or ill) on the faith formation of Catholic children and youth. What kind of faith (and with what effectiveness) will our Catholic adults be sharing?

James J. DeBoy
Catonsville, Md.

Developing Disciples

"A Future Without Parish Schools," by Terry Golway, (12/10) laments the absence of a comprehensive youth ministry at his church and celebrates the fact that his children received excellent youth ministry from the nearest Methodist church.

As a diocesan director of youth ministry in the Catholic Church, I know that there are wonderful, comprehensive parish programs all over the country that are very similar to the ones his children attend at the Methodist church.

Maybe one of the "best kept secrets" in the Catholic Church is not just Catholic social teachings, but also the fact that in 1997, the U.S. bishops promulgated a comprehensive framework for Catholic youth ministry. Most dioceses and indeed many parishes use the bishops' document *Renewing the Vision* to build youth programs that engage teenagers through interactive catechesis, and justice and service outreach activities involve them in the life and mission of the church.

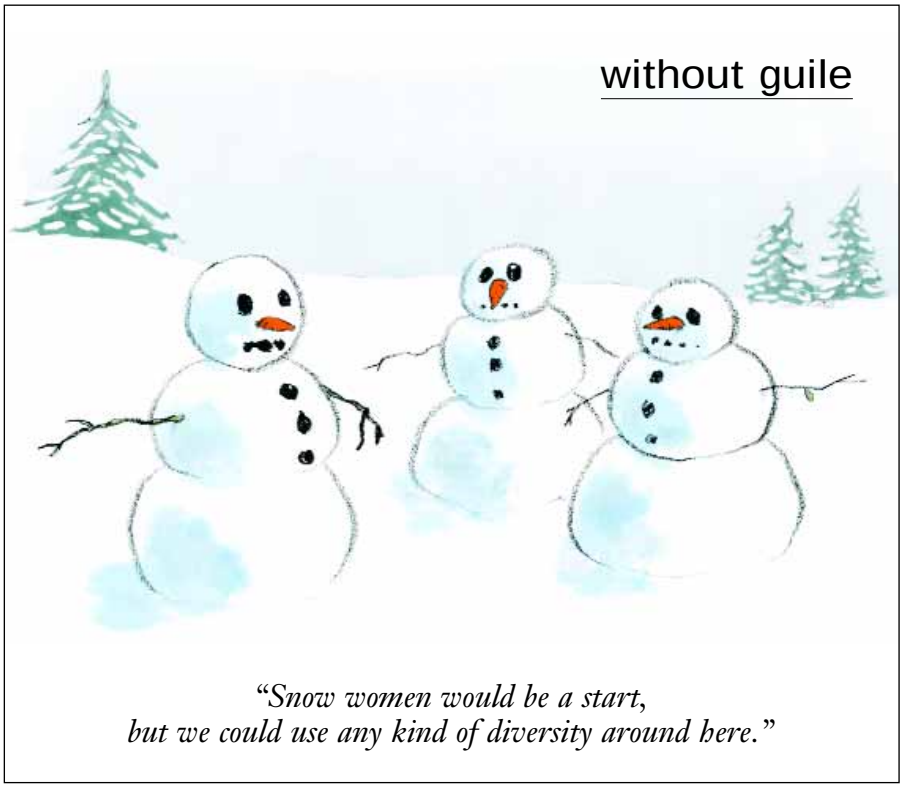
Developing young disciples who understand the challenges of the Gospel and the teachings of the church is a goal of Catholic youth ministry. A comprehensive youth ministry is an extremely effective way to assist young people to appreciate a church, whether Methodist or Catholic. The difference is that our Catholic programming not only helps our young people to build a Catholic identity, but also helps them to appreciate, understand and integrate the uniqueness of their faith tradition.

Mr. Golway and others who lament the lack of effective youth ministry in our church can contact the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry to find out how they can get effective ministry programs for their children in their own parishes.

Carole Goodwin
Chair, Board of Directors, N.F.C.Y.M.
Louisville, Ky.

Old School

Regarding "A Future Without Parish Schools": Youth ministry programs, even very good ones, are not an adequate alternative to Catholic schools. Nothing is. I am a Catholic parish youth minister; and like the Methodist leader of Junior Youth Fellowship mentioned in Terry Golway's column, my job is to put together a comprehensive youth ministry program for teenagers. I find education to be the hardest component to do well. Nothing takes the place of time. At the end of a two-hour youth rally, or a weekend retreat, or even a weeklong service trip, pilgrimage or leadership camp, they



"Snow women would be a start, but we could use any kind of diversity around here."

CARTOON BY PAT BYRNES

all go home to the "real world." All too often the memories fade and the whole experience is forgotten or acquires the rosy glow of a daydream.

A Catholic school experience made up of six-hour days, 180 days a year for multiple years does not stand in contrast to a different, secular reality—it *is* the student's reality.

If Mr. Golway is right, and we are facing a future without parish schools, this should be seen for what it is—a deep, irreparable loss and a diminishment of our Catholic culture.

Joe Peabody
Houston, Tex.

Spoken Word

Regarding Karen Sue Smith's Of Many Things column on Dec. 24 about reading stories aloud at Christmas: In my family there are two Christmas "read-alouds." The first is long, but done with the children (now grown) and cocoa the afternoon after the tree goes up on the fourth Sunday of Advent. It is "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," by Barbara Robinson.

The other is more esoteric, and is read in parts: "How Come Christmas?" by Roark Bradford, from *The Fireside Book of Christmas Stories*, edited by Edward Wagenknecht. This one is hilarious and touching. It absolutely *must* be read out loud. The power of those read-alouds became evident shortly before Christmas when our 21-year-old daughter, spending her first Christmas away, called to ask us to send her the text of "How Come Christmas?" It was part of her effort to make Christmas where she now is feel like home.

Renee Goodspeed
Rochester, N.H.

Holiday Welcome

I enjoyed reading Of Many Things, by Karen Sue Smith, (12/24) about reading aloud from books. My favorite Christmas reading is from Moss Hart's autobiography, *Act One*, which was published by Random House in 1959. Moss Hart was a great playwright and director.

The "reading" is a wonderful and poignant study of the strained but loving relationship between a son and his father.

A number of years ago I tried reading this to our family gathering of 30 or so at Christmas dinner. Unfortunately the reading was too delicate and personal to be done before such a large group. Perhaps it's better read alone, but it still moves me.

I first heard this being read by Jonathan Schwartz many years ago on his radio program from New York. He has done this many times during the ensuing years, and it is always welcome.

Joe Agresta
Danbury, Conn.

Christmas Escape

I was immersed in pre-Christmas madness when I sat down after work to unwind with **America**. The Of Many Things column by Karen Sue Smith (12/24) on reading out loud warmed me. The brilliant article by Archbishop George H. Niederauer on the great Flannery O'Connor fired me up. And finally, Karen Sue Smith's story about "Two Surprise Guests" inspired me. Her voice echoes Flannery O'Connor's, and it is the kind of voice our aching church needs to hear more of.

Ted Rosean
Wilmette, Ill.

Rome Sweet Home

Austen Ivereigh's "From Thames to Tiber" (1/7) is both the fairest and the most informative article I've read about Tony Blair's conversion. We don't exactly know his personal reasons for it and won't unless or until he tells us himself. Lacking that essential element, most articles have highlighted other factors, such as his family (which were already known), or have gone political and played up the "hypocrite" line. Ivereigh gives us more background about Blair's attraction to Catholicism and more insight into the issue of believers in politics than any other analysis I've seen. Thanks for a very instructive read.

Tom Heneghan
Paris, France

Structures of Sin

I was troubled by Ivan J. Kauffman's "Facing the Inquisition" (12/10). It seems the Catholic Church in the end was not able to hold itself responsible and to confess in its own name the institutional sins announced by John Paul II, namely, the "religious wars, courts of Inquisition, and other violations of the rights of individuals." With the help of apologetic hairsplitting, the church was able to repent only sins committed by individuals in the name of the church.

As the article explains, the church did not hold itself responsible for the sins, because the Inquisition and other atrocities were "never formally approved either by a council or an infallible papal declaration." But what about the sins of the church failing, either by council or declaration, to renounce and condemn individuals committing sins in its name?

I am disturbed and disappointed that the church did not confess its own responsibility in the commission of those sins.

Tom French-Corbett
Moorestown, N.J.

Christ Among Us

I appreciated Stephen Martin's "Brother Lawrence and the Chimney Bird" (12/24). Brother Lawrence is truly the model for all of us in the 21st century who seek faithfully to follow Christ. A quiet moment for one's own thoughts is hard enough to find in this age of e-mail, voice mail and cellphones—let alone trying to find time to pray the rosary.

Brother Lawrence reminds us that we need not set aside our daily business in order to find time with God. We can commune with Christ in our seemingly secular activities, even while washing the dishes. No doubt we just have to be conscious of the presence of God. Thanks for the encouraging article.

David Pendleton
Kaiula, Hawaii

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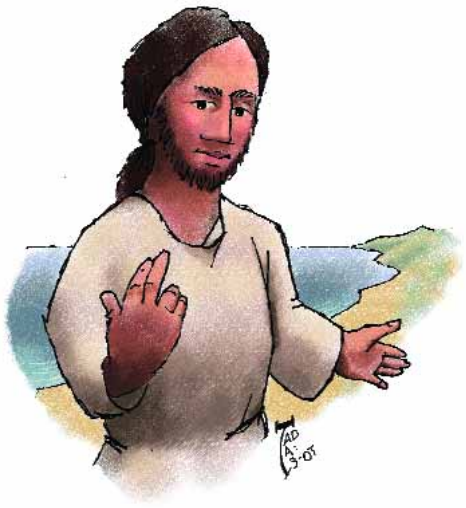
The Light of Hope

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A), Jan. 27, 2008

Readings: Is 8:23–9:3; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17; Mt 4:12-23

"The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light" (Mt 4:16)



ART BY TAD DUNNE

WHY DID PETER and Andrew, James and John follow Jesus? According to Matthew's narrative (and Mark's), these four fishermen had no prior knowledge of Jesus. While they were at work in Capernaum one day, Jesus came along and said, "Follow me," and they did. Answering Jesus' call meant leaving behind their families and businesses for very uncertain futures. Why did they do it?

One answer appeals to the literary skill of the Evangelists or their sources. The utter simplicity of the narrative—Jesus calls, and the disciples follow—serves to highlight Jesus' personal attractiveness and persuasiveness. It leads the reader to imagine how wonderful Jesus must have been to inspire such an immediate and total response on the disciples' part. While there is much to be said for this interpretation, there may be more to the disciples' action than that.

Today's reading from Matthew 4 places Jesus' call of his first disciples in a wider context. It suggests that the first disciples followed Jesus out of hope. Their hope was rooted in the past, looked forward to the future and was based in the present.

Matthew prefaces the beginning of Jesus' public ministry with a quotation from Isaiah: "The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light." This prophecy was first uttered some 700 years before the time of Jesus. It expressed the hope of a people threatened by powerful political neighbors, looking for some kind of salvation. Isaiah's prophecy also expressed well the political situation of Israel in Jesus' time—caught between capitulation to the Romans (and their local supporters) and the promises of greatness made to God's people. How could these be reconciled? To Jesus' contemporaries like the four fishermen and to early Christians like Matthew, Jesus seemed to be a light shining in the darkness. They saw Isaiah's hope being fulfilled before their eyes, a hope rooted in Israel's past.

Before recounting the call of the first disciples, Matthew provides a summary of Jesus' preaching: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of heaven refers to the future fullness of God's rule and its acknowledgment by all creation. It is what we pray for when we say, "Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This was the central theme of Jesus' preaching and activity. The first disciples looked forward to experiencing and being part of that glorious future kingdom.

Matthew follows the call of the first disciples with a summary of Jesus' activities: teaching, preaching and healing. In the Gospels these are the ways in which Jesus manifests the presence of God's kingdom among us. Jesus showed the first disciples how to live in their present with the hope of experiencing the future fullness of God's kingdom. Their hope was based on the person of Jesus as their light shining in the darkness, their light of hope.

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

Praying With Scripture

- How might you have responded to Jesus' call, "Follow me"?
- In what ways has Jesus been a light shining in the darkness?
- Why do you follow Jesus? What do you hope for from this?

A Christian Essential

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A), Feb. 3, 2008

Readings: Zep 2:3; 3:12-13; Ps 146:6-10; 1 Cor 1:26-31; Mt 5:1-12

"Blessed are the poor in the spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3)

HOPE IS ESSENTIAL to human existence. We have personal hopes—for good health, success in our undertakings and happiness in our lives. We have communal hopes—for seasonable and tranquil weather, peace among nations and progress in human welfare (justice, education, medicine and so on). Some hopes may be only dreams and wishes, because there is not much we can do about them. In order for hope to be genuine, there must be some possibility that what we hope for may actually come to pass. And it helps if we can do something about it.

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5 are among the most famous and beloved texts in the Bible. They serve as a preface or prologue for the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes list the kinds of persons whom Jesus declares to be blessed, happy and fortunate, and they tell us what such persons can hope for. They place before us what our goal as Christians can and should be and show us how to reach that goal. They tell us how our hopes can be fulfilled. With respect to the kingdom of heaven, the Beatitudes are both the entrance requirements and the promises of the blessings to be enjoyed there.

Each beatitude has two parts. The first part declares blessed or happy those who display certain attitudes or perform certain actions. These are the qualifications for entering the kingdom of heaven. The second part explains what rewards such persons may expect in the kingdom. Many of us so focus on the first part that we neglect the second part and thereby turn the beatitudes into ethical rules and ignore the hopes joined to them.

When we view the Beatitudes from the perspective of Christian hope, we might do well to reverse the order and look first at the second parts. What can we hope for? The list includes the kingdom of heaven, comfort and consolation, sharing in God's reign, divine justice, divine mercy, seeing God, being children of God and perfect joy and happiness. All these hopes are different aspects of the same thing: fullness of life in God's kingdom. In Christian hope, Jesus' life, death and resurrection have turned our wildest dreams and wishes not only into possibilities but into realities.

The first part of each beatitude lists the qualities, characteristics and behaviors of those who really aspire to fullness of life in God's kingdom. Such persons try to be poor in spirit, compassionate, meek, merciful, clean of heart and peacemakers; and they are willing even to be insulted and persecuted for their ideals and values. These values stand in opposition to what is often celebrated and glorified in our popular media today. Nevertheless, these are the kinds of persons we must strive to be if we ever hope to turn our dreams into realities.

This coming week we observe Ash Wednesday. Lent provides us an opportunity to reflect on what we hope for, what our values and virtues are and why we can hope for fullness of life with God (hint: it is through Jesus' death and resurrection). ***Daniel J. Harrington***

Praying With Scripture

- What do you hope for? Where does fullness of life with God stand on your list?
- Using the first parts of the Beatitudes as an examination of conscience, where do you stand at present?
- How might the Beatitudes serve as a good entry point for your observance of Lent?