America

1909 America's CENTURY 2009

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Facing Life Choices

A Conversion Amid a Contraceptive Culture
Jennifer Fulwiler

Pro-Woman, Pro-Life
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Millennials and Religious Life
Richard G. Malloy

Of Many Things

EVERY WEEK I SPEND some time thumbing through old issues of **America**. A total of 198 volumes, from 1909 to the present, occupy nearly two full stacks in our editorial office. I am looking for a selection for the feature on our Web site called **In These Pages**. Every week we post articles from our archives on topics addressed in that week's print edition. (Have a look at americamagazine.org/pages.)

As the magazine's online editor, it might seem odd for me to engage in such a backward-looking pursuit. But I relish it. If you're looking for an introduction to the last 100 years of American Catholic history, there are few better places to start. The **America** archives are a rich resource for all the editors here, and you can often spot one of them perched at a desk in our editorial offices, poring over page after page of yellowing paper.

Sadly this is not an activity that most readers of **America** are able to enjoy. Sure, some of our loyal readers keep old issues for decades, stacking them in closets or garages. But only a few places—mostly libraries—are home to a full set, and that number is dwindling.

It is no great secret that libraries are slowly discarding their print collections in favor of digital reproductions. A few years ago, in the early days of the Web, we received a few calls from librarians who wondered whether we would like their old volumes of **America,** since they no longer had use for them. The problem is that digital versions are available for only a relatively few recent years of most print magazines—in the case of **America**, back to about 1988. That leaves the first 80 years of **America**'s analysis and commentary no longer available in many libraries.

Thus was born the **America** archives project. Over the past year, we have been cobbling together a full set of volumes for digital scanning. We are grateful to those who have contributed to our collection, in particular the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center in New York and the Jesuit Center in Wernersville, Pa. Thanks to them, and the roomy interior of my dad's old Mercury station wagon, we now have almost an entire set.

Our project is an ambitious one: to scan and index every article, editorial and book review that has appeared in these pages since April 1909. By our rough estimate, that amounts to over 150,000 pages of material. To scan articles, the bindings of each volume must be removed, making them practically unusable after they are scanned. The magazine owns only two full sets of bound issues, which is why we solicited volumes from our readers and friends.

To help us with this project, we have engaged the services of a company that already distributes the last 20 years of **America** in digitized form to university libraries and other educational institutions. Over the next year or two, they will scan every article in our archives into viewable pages, using the industry-standard portable document format (PDF). They will also be preparing abstracts for each article, a crucial part of the process to facilitate the search for content.

This is an expensive project, but one that we believe will provide a great resource to researchers everywhere, as well as to **America** readers. To help recoup the considerable cost, we plan to sell individual articles on our Web site for a nominal fee. We will also be applying for grants and seeking the financial assistance of our generous supporters. The highlight of this enterprise is that students and researchers will be able to search our archives through university libraries at no cost using the digital distribution service mentioned above.

As the country's oldest Catholic weekly magazine, **America** has always been an invaluable tool for researchers. If you want to know how the church grappled with a particular religious or political issue, chances are you will find an answer in our pages. For this, our centennial year, my colleague James T. Keane, S.J., has been editing a selection of our "greatest hits" for reproduction in the print magazine. So far we have highlighted articles by Hilaire Belloc and John Courtney Murray, S.J.; pieces by John F. Kennedy and others are still to come.

Yet these articles provide only a hint of the range of analysis and nuance that have been the hallmark of this magazine for so many years. Want to read the editors on Joe McCarthy, Richard McCormack, S.J., on *Humanae Vitae* or Andrew Greeley on Bruce Springsteen? For now, you're welcome to visit our offices and peruse our collection. In the not too distant future, we hope, you won't have to travel so far.

Maurice Timothy Reidy

America

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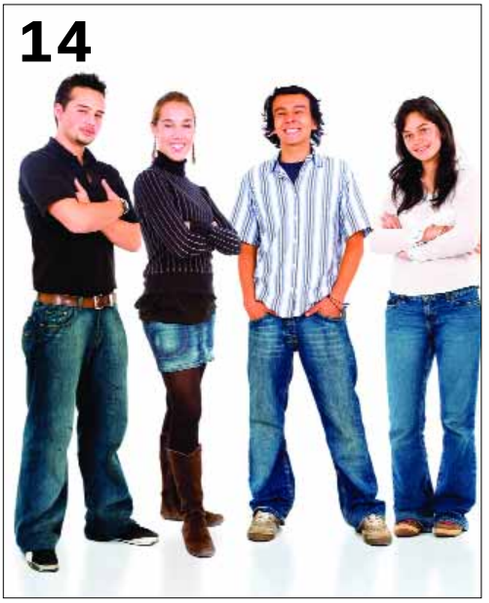

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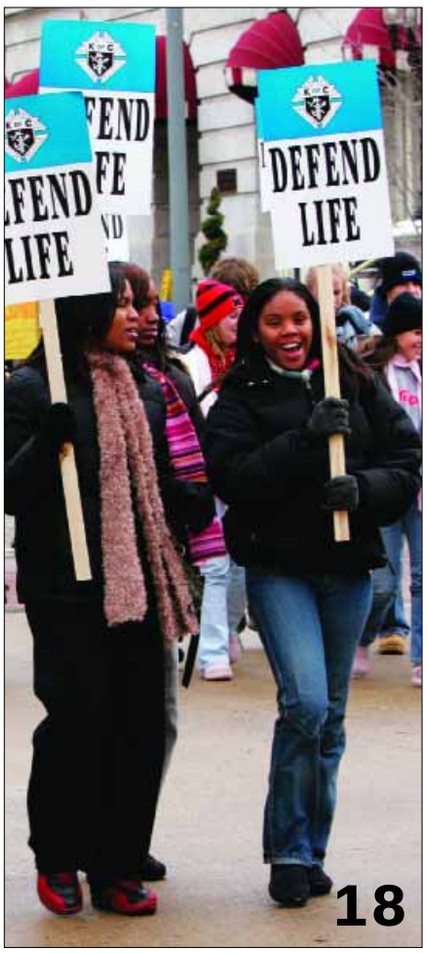


This week @ America Connects

Ron Hansen talks about his new novel *Exiles* and, from the archives, John R. Donahue, S.J., on advances in biblical scholarship. Plus, Jennifer Fulwiler answers readers' questions on our blog, July 7 and 8 at americamagazine.org.

Tim Russert, Man for Others

In the midst of the avalanche of news coverage of Tim Russert's death came the inevitable references to his Catholic roots, including his Jesuit education at Canisius High School in Buffalo and John Carroll University in Cleveland. One commentator said he was "raised by Jesuits," which not only neglects his own parents, but also sounds suspiciously like "raised by wolves." Less known is the esteem in which the longtime host of "Meet the Press" was held within the Jesuit world. He was a recipient of honorary degrees from many of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the country. Russert embodied a certain ideal of Jesuit education: the working-class youth who, through diligence and faith, contributes to his family, his church and the common good, while keeping a sense of humor, even about his own past as a Jesuit alumnus. He delighted in recounting the comment of John Sturm, S.J., prefect of discipline at Canisius. When the young Russert asked Father Sturm for mercy after a minor infraction, the prefect said, "Mercy is for God. I deliver justice!"

"Man for others" (or "person for others") is a phrase often used to describe the ideal Jesuit alumnus or alumna. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., who popularized the expression, meant it to be a challenge: it is not simply about "being nice" but being a person of self-sacrifice in the cause of justice who strives to emulate Christ in his labors and loves. Russert exemplified this ideal in both his professional and personal life. We pray that he will now enjoy God's abundant love and, yes, mercy.

U.S. Forests Threatened

The nation's 155 national forests, from the Chugach National Forest in Alaska to the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire and Maine, are under attack by the Bush administration's new rules issued in April. They remove key protections not only for forests but also for endangered wildlife populations that make their home in forests and grasslands. The conservation group Defenders of Wildlife and two other organizations filed a lawsuit in May to challenge the rules because they eliminate protections that call for the management of forests and grasslands in a manner that protects them and their wildlife populations.

Trent Orr, an attorney for Earthjustice, one of the groups participating in the suit, has called the administration's move President George W. Bush's "parting gift to the timber industry" because the new rules "remove vital checks and balances on logging while minimizing...the public's say in maintaining wildlife." The suit claims that the U.S. Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act by approving the new regulations without adequately analyzing their environmental impact. Earlier rules contained measures that protected wildlife, water and forests, and provided opportunities for public involvement in decisions affecting them. The general counsel for Defenders of Wildlife, Bob Dreher, has said that "the American public has a right to be involved in planning for the management of their national forests." In the Bush administration's remaining months, it should take steps that truly protect the nation's threatened forests and grasslands rather than maintaining its too industry-friendly stance.

Compassion for Refugees

In addition to the 11.4 million refugees cited in the latest figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, another 26 million internally displaced persons have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict or persecution. An additional 4.6 million Palestinian refugees are helped by a different U.N. agency, UNRWA, and are therefore not counted in the above figures. The crisis, which is worldwide, will be exacerbated by a vote of the European Parliament on June 18 that approved a directive calling for strict treatment of illegal immigrants. The directive is only slightly less harsh than measures already operative in some developed nations. The bishops' conferences of the European Union have expressed "deep concern," saying that the provisions do not "take into account the reality of many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers" and insisting that "the dignity of every human being should be respected."

That sentiment was expressed earlier this month in Rome by Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., the Jesuit superior general, who said that often "refugees do not know how to survive.... Our families, natural borders, should always be open to welcome others in difficulty." Speaking of the emigrant experience of Europeans, he called for the development of a "collective memory" so that people do not forget what it is like to be a migrant. The Rev. Lorenzo Prencipe, the director of Rome's center for emigration studies, echoed those sentiments: "European migrants of the last century had to confront discrimination in daily life, but I don't think they ever had to confront such restrictive or penalizing measures." The current collective lack of compassion shows a profound failure of moral imagination and political will.

Editorial

Synod on the Word of God

MORE THAN 40 YEARS after the Second Vatican Council, the Bible still does not figure at the center of Catholic life the way the Eucharist does. When they meet in synod at the Vatican in October, bishops from around the world will address one of the great unfinished works of the council—namely, how Catholics can make the word of God their own. Even though the Catholic Lectionary for Sundays was redesigned in 1969 to use a three-year cycle of readings in order to promote greater familiarity with the whole of Scripture, Catholics do not yet own the Scriptures the way many Protestants, especially evangelicals, do. In assigning "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church" as the topic for the coming 12th Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Benedict signaled his recognition not only of how important proclamation, prayer and study of the Scripture are to the church, but also of his awareness that the church has far to go to complete the council's reforms.

A summary of reports received from episcopal conferences and the Eastern churches, the *instrumentum laboris*, or working paper, released last month is a measure of the health of the whole church. It reveals a community that appreciates the rich resources of the council that are still to be mined, and it sheds light on a church laboring thoughtfully to overcome shortcomings in the implementation of Vatican II's reforms.

To be sure, this is a Catholic document, where the Bible is regarded as "the church's book." Any single text, it insists, must be read in relation to the whole canon by the light of faith, together with the church's tradition and with the guidance of the magisterium. But there is no impetus, as some wanted and others feared, for a heavy-handed imposition of hierarchical authority over new efforts to appropriate Scripture. The slight attention given, however, to the contribution of exegetes and theologians is to be lamented. The use and study of Scripture is one area in which the trend of recent decades to narrow the ordinary magisterium to the repetition of hierarchical pronouncements might more easily be reversed. Overall, the *instrumentum laboris* reminds readers that when it comes to the evangelization, catechesis and liturgical celebration of the word of God, the hopes of the council are still to be realized.

A significant shortcoming of the postconciliar reforms, according to the document, is the failure to communicate the sacramental nature of the celebration of the word in the liturgy. This is partly a result of poor preaching, it suggests, in particular the failure of homilists to open up "the treasures" of the Scriptures for the congregation. The absence of biblical preaching, the report indicates, may be due to a lack of adequate training. But it is worth pointing out that other pastoral priorities have frequently overtaken the appropriation of the Gospel as the center of Catholic pastoral practice and everyday culture. Signals that other things, like the catechism and pro-life activities, are of greater pastoral importance did not help. Setting up litmus tests for Catholic identity may also have shifted the content of some Catholic preaching in other directions.

CERTAINLY REVITALIZING PREACHING should be at the top of the synod's agenda. Too many of the faithful feel unenlightened and undernourished by what they hear each week from the pulpit. Nothing could strengthen the liturgy and give new vitality to the Catholic community as much as biblically rooted preaching. Another development that could greatly enrich the spiritual lives of the people as well as of the clergy, the *instrumentum laboris* points out, is the practice of *lectio divina*. This ancient form of prayer can contribute not only to personal appropriation of Scripture but also to spiritual conversation among parishioners and members of lay and religious communities, and so lead to greater unity in the faith community.

Finally, the working paper points to the Word of God active in today's world and is open to the faith of others and to the dialogue of faith with culture. It notes how joint study and prayer over the Scriptures can both illuminate the differences that led to the separation of churches and contribute to appreciation of the common faith in Jesus Christ that unites all the baptized. Likewise, it affirms that the word of God is found in all creation, especially in the human person, and in the cultures that are humanity's collective expression. The Bible itself, notes the document, represents a pluralism of cultures, "a series of encounters with man's search to respond to his ultimate questions." Lastly, the document affirms that as the church responds to the signs of the times, "the Word of God, planted by Christ as the seed of God's Kingdom, makes its way through history."

Brazilian Bishops Organize Against Slave Labor

Brazil's Catholic bishops have joined a 21st-century abolitionist movement called the National Front Against Slave Labor. The front, which includes congressional leaders and representatives of unions and social movements, was launched June 4. Its immediate goal is to push a constitutional amendment through Brazil's National Congress before the July recess. "Slavery is an abominable practice that the church in Brazil, through the voice of some bishops and the Pastoral Land Commission, has denounced since the 1970s in a systematic and documented way," said a bishops' conference statement read by the Rev. José Ernanne Pinheiro, political adviser to the bishops, during the campaign launch. Slavery was abolished in Brazil 120 years ago, but special teams in Brazil's Ministry of Labor have rescued nearly 29,000 people from forced labor since 1995. Many of them were poor peasant workers on farms.

Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah Retires

Retired Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem officially handed over his pastor's staff to Archbishop Fouad Twal during a Mass of thanksgiving, ending 20 years as head of the church in the Holy Land. Patriarch Sabbah turned 75 in March and submitted his resignation to Pope Benedict XVI as required by canon law. He chose to celebrate his final Mass June 21 at the Church of Gethsemane. Archbishop Twal, who has been coadjutor to the Latin patriarchate for nearly three years, replaced Patriarch Sabbah during his installation Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher the following day. As he entered the Church of Gethsemane, Patriarch Sabbah was greeted with a standing ovation. Patriarch Sabbah urged the Christian community to take action by praying, reading Scripture, going to Mass and living lives ruled by love. The community must see the image of God in all people, live in communion with others and be able to forgive while still demanding their God-given rights, he said.

Tomko Speaks at Congress

When people pause and question the purpose of their lives, they "yearn for a spiritual answer," said Cardinal Jozef Tomko of Slovakia at the opening Mass of the 49th International Eucharistic Congress. "So many people are moving here and there—6.5 billion people busy working to improve their living conditions," said Cardinal Tomko, Pope Benedict XVI's representative to the congress. Why are "we plunged on this road?" he asked the crowd of more than 10,000 people, including laypeople, cardinals, bishops, priests and nuns from around the world gathered for the June 15 Mass in Quebec City's hockey arena. A eucharistic congress "allows us to encounter" these questions and "examine the meaning of our life and death," said the cardinal. "What does it mean to be the gift of God" and what is the Eucharist, he asked, referring to the theme of the June 15-22 congress, "The Eucharist, Gift of God for the Life of the World."

Spring Meeting at a Glance

At the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' spring meeting in Orlando, Fla., the bishops:

- Approved a 2,000-word policy statement calling embryonic stem-cell research "gravely immoral."
- Failed to reach a conclusion on the fate of a 700-page translation of the proper readings of the Roman Missal.
- Gave permission for work to begin on new ethical guidelines on medically assisted nutrition and hydration.
- Heard an interim report on the causes and context of child sex abuse by priests.
- Began a dialogue with priests' representatives on fallout from the clergy sex abuse scandal.
- Declared Sept. 26, 2010, as National Catholic Charities Sunday to mark the 100th anniversary of the network of Catholic social service agencies.
- Agreed to change the Spanish word "vosotros" to "ustedes" in Spanish-language Masses in the U.S.
- Voted to keep the 2009 assessment on dioceses at the same level as 2008.
- Heard presentations on the implications for church life of recent surveys.
- Got an update on the work of task forces focusing on five USCCB priority areas.
- Spent nearly half of the meeting in closed regional meetings, executive session or in prayer.

Lambeth Conference: Time of Reckoning

This summer's once-a-decade Lambeth Conference marks a potentially defining moment for the worldwide Anglican Communion and a time of reckoning for ecumenical dialogue. The Vatican, which is sending representatives to the gathering of the world's Anglican leadership on July 16-Aug. 4, will be closely following its deliberations to see what direction it takes on such crucial questions as internal unity, authority, the role of the bishop and Anglican identity. What has pushed these questions to the forefront is the ordination of openly gay clerics, the blessing of gay unions and the ordination of women bishops in some Anglican provinces, particularly in the United States. Those developments have threatened to split the Anglican Communion. For the Vatican, they have raised new questions about the future of the 40-year-old dialogue with the Anglican Church. "It's very important for Anglicans to understand the depth of the change in our relationship that, in a sense, is being forced on us by the positions they are taking," said one Vatican official, who asked not to be named.

Romanian Catholics Defend Intercommunion

The Romanian Catholic Church, an Eastern rite, has defended an Orthodox archbishop who faces sanctions for receiving Communion at an Eastern Catholic Divine Liturgy. "This man of humanism, dignity and dialogue has helped create excellent Catholic-Orthodox ties in our region," Bishop Alexandru Mesian of Lugoj, Romania, said in an interview with Catholic News Service on June 11. "He wishes to be in communion with other Christians and we have welcomed his unprecedented, progressive gesture with great joy. We are sad he is now being attacked with such ferocity for it." Bishop Mesian said Orthodox laypeople regularly go to confession and receive Communion at Eastern Catholic churches in Romania. Orthodox Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu of Banat, a region of Eastern Europe partly in Romania, will appear before Romanian Orthodox leaders in July to explain why he received Communion during the dedication of an Eastern Catholic church in late May. Father Constantin Stoica, spokesman for the Orthodox church's Bucharest Patriarchate in Romania, said Metropolitan Corneanu's action would be "analyzed and dealt with" when his church's governing synod meets July 8-9.

Fundamental Moral Line on Stem Cells

The U.S. bishops overwhelmingly approved a statement June 13 calling the use of human embryos in stem cell research "gravely immoral" and unnecessary. They also declared that stem cell research does not in itself present a conflict between science and religion. In the last vote of the public session of their spring general assembly in Orlando on June 12-14, the bishops voted 191 to 1 in favor of the document, titled *On Embryonic Stem-Cell Research: A Statement of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.* "It now seems undeniable that once we cross the fundamental moral line that prevents us from treating any fellow human being as a mere object of research, there is no stopping point," the document said. "The only moral stance that affirms the human dignity of all of us is to reject the first step down this path." Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., introduced the document on behalf of Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, who was not at the Orlando meeting.

Washington Funeral Mass for Tim Russert

The presumptive Democratic and Republican presidential nominees were among the scores of mourners at the private funeral Mass on June 18 for the NBC News Washington bureau chief and "Meet the Press" moderator Tim Russert, who died suddenly June 13 at the age of 58. In his homily, Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, said the presence of both Democratic Senator Barack Obama and Republican Senator John McCain was not only a special tribute to Russert, but to the United States, speaking to the country's "values of respect and to those fundamental virtues which ultimately are more important even than politics and the shifting sands of public life." The funeral Mass at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in the Georgetown section of Washington—Russert's parish—was private, but speakers were set up outside for listeners to hear the proceedings. A memorial service for Russert was held later the same day at the Kennedy Center in Washington and broadcast live on MSNBC; it featured tributes from fellow journalists Tom Brokaw and Brian Williams; his former teacher Lucille Socciarelli, of the Sisters of Mercy; his son, Luke Russert; and others

Tim Russert is pictured during his primary school days. Mercy Sister Mary Lucille Socciarelli helped start Russert on his career path. As his seventh-grade teacher at St. Bonaventure School in West Seneca, N.Y., she started a school newspaper and made him its editor.

Limits Set for Legionaries in Baltimore

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien of Baltimore has established a set of requirements under which the Legionaries of Christ and its lay branch, Regnum Christi, must operate in the archdiocese. Saying pastors in recent years have raised concerns "regarding a lack of pastoral transparency at times and a tendency to conduct parallel programs within our parishes without the knowledge of local pastors," Archbishop O'Brien outlined the requirements under which the Legionaries must operate in his column in the June 12 issue of The Catholic Review, the archdiocesan newspaper. The detailed requirements were finalized during an early June meeting between the archbishop's staff and Father Álvaro Corcuera, the order's Rome-based superior general. In the column, Archbishop O'Brien said that while the Legionaries have "operated with the blessing of the Holy See," the order's activities "have not been without certain tension" in the United States and the archdiocese. His

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

column was not specific except to say that "undue pressure was placed on individuals to conform to the rule of Regnum Christi and in a context of secrecy."

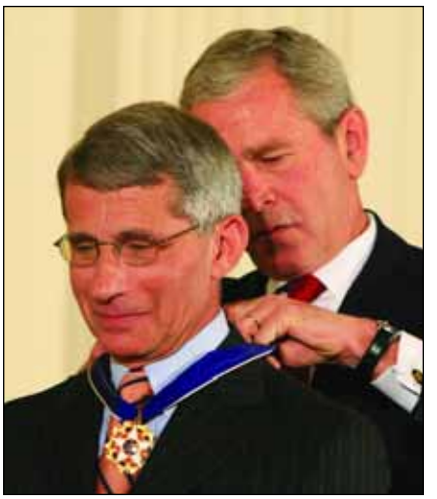
Independent-Minded Laity Here to Stay

The days of Catholics who "pay, pray and obey" are gone and likely never coming back, according to a sociologist who has studied the beliefs and practices of American Catholics for more than two decades. As a result, the church must find ways to reach new generations of Catholics who "don't think church leaders are any wiser or any holier than they are," said James Davidson of Purdue University, who spoke at the opening session of the annual gathering of the Catholic Theological Society of America. Davidson has conducted research on four generations of American Catholics, divided in relation to the Second Vatican Council, which met from 1962 to 1965: pre-Vatican II, those born in 1940 or earlier; Vatican II, born 1941-60; post-Vatican II, born 1961-82; and millennial, born since 1983. His findings set the tone for the conference on June 5-8, the theme of which was "Generations." Today's Catholics are generally better off financially, better educated and more integrated into mainstream American culture than their pre-Vatican II counterparts, Davidson said. They are no longer outsiders or victims of discrimination for whom the church was a refuge. They also grew up in a church where the emphasis shifted from the hierarchy to the people of God, from the ordained to the baptized. "These formative experiences have lasting effects on the way Catholics think and act," he said.

Nationwide Walk for the Poor

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, one of the oldest lay service organizations in the United States, will mark its 175th anniversary by doing what it has been doing for all those years: serving the poor. The organization has planned a special event to highlight its work and raise money for the poor. A nationwide event called Friends of the Poor Walk will take place Sept. 27, the feast day of St. Vincent de Paul. Diocesan councils, district councils and parish-based conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul have all been invited to participate; walks will be organized locally. As of June 17, 61 walks had been scheduled across the country. Among the walk sites are large cities like New Orleans, Philadelphia, Washington, St. Louis and New York. Individuals and groups can register for the event on the walk's Web site, www.svdpfriendsofthepoorwalk.org. "The number is growing every day. There has been a massive outpouring of support," Chris Desloge, the walk administrator, told Catholic News Service.

Fauci, AIDS Researcher, Given Medal of Freedom



Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., an award-winning physician and AIDS researcher, was among six recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom June 19 in the East Room of the White House. "Three decades ago, a mysterious and terrifying plague began to take the lives of people across the world. Before this malady even had a name, it had a fierce opponent in Dr. Anthony Fauci," said President George W. Bush at the ceremony. Fauci and two other Catholics—former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and Gen. Peter Pace, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—were among the six receiving the nation's highest civilian honor. The other honorees were pediatric neurosurgeon Dr. Benjamin S. Carson Sr.; Judge Laurence H. Silberman of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia; and the late Tom Lantos, a Holocaust survivor and Democratic congressman. Lantos's widow, Annette, received the medal in his honor.

Henry Chadwick, Anglican Ecumenist, Dies at 87

The Rev. Henry Chadwick, an internationally respected Anglican scholar and pioneer of the modern ecumenical movement, died at the age of 87. The distinguished theologian and historian of the early church died peacefully while hospitalized in Oxford, England, June 19. His funeral took place on June 25 at Christ Church in Oxford. The married father of three was known for his enthusiasm for dialogue with the Catholic Church. He was a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission between 1969 and 1981, and again between 1983 and 1990. The commission is the official body in which dialogue between the Catholic and Anglican churches occurs. Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion, paid tribute to Rev. Chadwick in a June 19 article in The Guardian, a London daily newspaper. Rev. Chadwick was so effective that people began to joke that "the Anglican Church may not have a pope, but it does have Henry Chadwick," the archbishop wrote.

Mind Where You Go

'Every square mile of this planet is holy ground.'

THE SUMMER VACATION season is an extended exercise in delayed gratification. If you didn't have the prospect of your long-anticipated vacation in the sun, or your reunion with far-scattered family and friends, or the thrill of exploring earth's remaining wildernesses, you would never submit to the rigors of travel in the 21st century. The list of contraindications is as long as your arm: global warming and the exponentially rising cost of driving your car; gridlock along the highways, airport security checks and hours of waiting in line to check your bags; getting through customs in foreign lands, negotiating visa rules, vaccinations and other vexations. We can put men on the moon, but we are increasingly hard-pressed to get ourselves around planet earth.

All these thoughts were running through my mind as I waited in vain for something to come up on the screens in Frankfurt International Airport to indicate my connecting flight to Johannesburg might depart soon. It was not to be. I was, however, about to discover a carefully guarded secret: there is a little restaurant tucked away in a corner of the international terminal that seems to be specifically reserved for the orphans of dead flights. I came upon it entirely by accident while I was surfing the snack bars, wondering how best to keep myself going through what promised to be a long night on the few euros I happened to have with me, not having planned a stopover in Germany. It was one of those surreal moments, to see a notice on the restaurant door, inviting passengers of—yes, really, my flight—to turn up at 8 p.m., at which hour we would be fed and watered gratis.

It was while enjoying this bounty that I found myself in conversation with a similarly stranded passenger from Linz, Austria. Over our unexpected supper, we chatted about how good it is that so many young people today are traveling so widely and encountering so many different cultures of the world, how it is surely making them more open-minded and more open-hearted, and how that has to augur well for the future. Then my companion, with a central European gravity that sometimes verges on dourness, pointed out that it all depends on the attitude with which you travel. Travel, he said, can open up your horizons and transform you into a world citizen, aware of being part of a wonderfully diverse, yet interdependent family. Or it can leave you thinking that everything, everywhere, is much the same, with ubiquitous Coke signs and Golden Arches and airports that have all been cloned from one ill-conceived original.

This gloomy possibility was reinforced for me recently as I waited at the travel agent's office while a family completed their arrangements for what sounded like a magical trip to the Caribbean. As the travel agent handed over their reservation papers, she asked them, "Do you know where it is, actually—your destination?" No, they didn't have a clue, nor did they seem to be particularly interested. She got out the world atlas, nevertheless, and enlightened them.

Perhaps the problem could be summed up in the word "mindfulness."

How mindful are we, as we wander this world of ours? Being mindful doesn't mean becoming a head-in-the-clouds mystic. Nor does it require transglobal travel. It can be practiced in our own streets and cities. All it takes is a bit of time, and open eyes and ears. Time and awareness—hallmarks of Jesus' ministry. Time to stop and think and be available to the world around us, eyes to really see and ears to really listen to what is actually there: the wonders, the beauty, and also the screaming needs and silent sorrows in ourselves and in others.

Ironically, two unlikely institutions of our main streets can help us to see the difference between racing through the world to get as quickly as possible to the place of gratification, and taking time to savor the journey and be responsive to whatever, and whomever, we encounter along the road.

The fast-food outlets are prime offenders in seducing us into the racing mentality. No matter that the choice of food calls for neither effort of imagination nor any discernment on the part of our taste buds. We won't be standing still long enough to taste it anyway. If we internalize this attitude to life, we will become like the holiday-makers who were asked on their return, "Where did you spend your vacation?" To which they replied: "We don't know. We flew!"

But close by the fast-food outlets there will usually be one of those congenial coffee shops that invite us into a very different approach to being alive and being human. They encourage us to sit down! Those comfortable sofas may be intended to lure us into buying more and more coffee, but they have a side effect: they also encourage us to be still for a while, to think, to reflect, maybe to read a newspaper or a book, and even to talk to one another.

My guess is that if Jesus were walking our sidewalks today, he would walk right past the fast-food outlets. He had, after all, much more satisfactory ways of inviting people into table fellowship. But we might well find him reclining in a coffee shop, engaging someone in challenging conversation, or even just sitting and watching, and being present to the world, taking time to taste the coffee.

Every square mile of this planet is holy ground if you walk it gently and mindfully and take the time to let it disclose its secrets. Every mile can be sacramental, waiting to reveal something of who God is, and no two revelations will ever be the same.

Enjoy your vacation. And mind where you go.

Margaret Silf

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One woman's journey from pro-choice atheist to pro-life Catholic

A Sexual Revolution

– BY JENNIFER FULWILER –

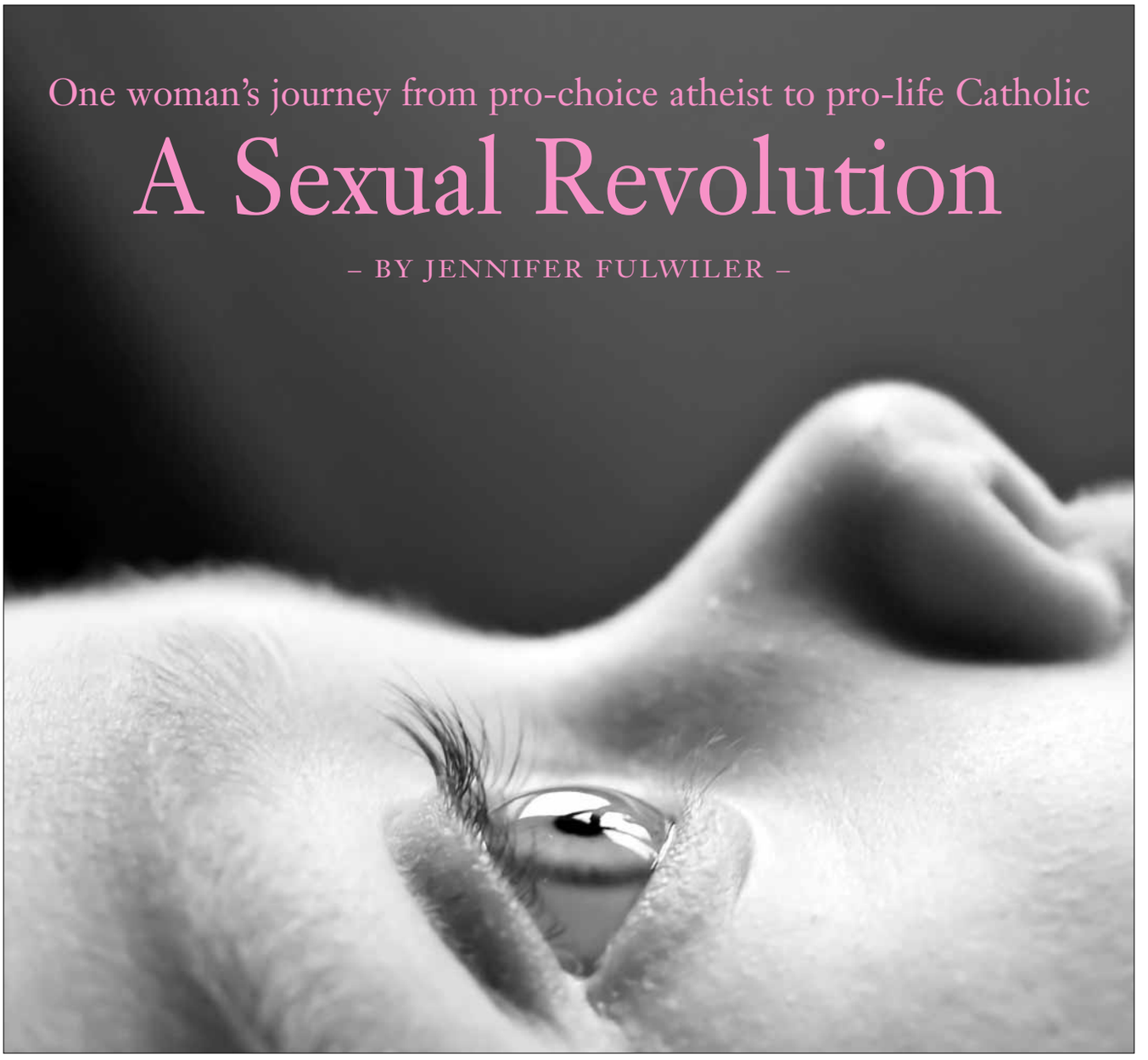

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/AINIS

BACK IN MY PRO-CHOICE DAYS, I read that in certain ancient societies it was common for parents to abandon unwanted newborns, leaving them to die of exposure. I found these stories to be as perplexing as they were horrifying. How could this happen? I could never understand how entire cultures could buy into something so obviously terrible, how something that modern society understands to be an unthinkable evil could be widely accepted among large groups of people.

Because of my deep distress at hearing of such crimes against humanity, I found it irritating when pro-lifers would refer to abortion as "killing babies." Obviously, nobody

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was in favor of killing babies, and to imply that those of us who were pro-choice would advocate as much was an insult to the babies throughout history who actually were killed by their "insane" societies. We were not in favor of killing anything. We simply felt that a woman had a right to stop the growth process of a fetus if she faced a crisis pregnancy. It was unfortunate, but that was the sacrifice that had to be made to prevent women from becoming victims of unwanted pregnancies.

At that time I was an atheist and had little exposure to religious social circles. As I began to search for God and open my mind to Christianity, however, I could not help but be exposed to pro-life thought more often, and I was put on the defensive about my views. One night I was discussing the topic with my husband, who was re-examining his own pro-choice stance. He made a passing remark that startled me into reconsidering this issue: "It just occurred to me that being pro-life is being pro-other-people's-life," he quipped. "Everyone is pro-their-own-life."

> The Catholic idea that we are always to treat the sexual act with awe and respect was a revolutionary message.

Growing Discomfort

His remark made me realize that my pro-choice viewpoints had put me in the position of deciding whose lives were worth living, and even who was human. Along with doctors, the government and other abortion advocates, I decided where to draw this crucial line. When I would come across Catholic Web sites or books that asserted "Life begins at conception," I would scoff, as was my habit, yet I found myself increasingly uncomfortable with my defense. I realized that my criteria for determining when human life begins were distressingly vague. I was putting the burden of proof on the fetuses to demonstrate to me that they were human, and I was a tough judge. I found myself looking the other way when I heard about things like the 3-D ultrasounds that showed fetuses touching their faces, smiling and opening their eyes at ages at which I still considered abortion acceptable. As modern technology revealed more and more evidence that fetuses were humans too, I would simply move the bar for what I considered human.

At some point I started to feel I was more determined to remain pro-choice than to analyze honestly who was and was not human. I started to see this phenomenon in others in the pro-choice community as well. As I researched issues like partial-birth abortion, I frequently became stunned to the point of feeling physically ill upon witnessing the level of evil that normal people can support. I could hardly believe my eyes when I read of reasonable, educated professionals calmly justifying infanticide by calling the victims fetuses instead of babies. It was then that I took a mental step back from the entire pro-choice movement. If this is what it meant to be pro-choice, I was not pro-choice.

Yet I still could not quite label myself pro-life.

I recognized that I too had probably told myself lies in order to maintain my support for abortion. Yet there was some tremendous pressure that kept me from objectively looking at the issue. Something deep within me screamed that not to allow women to have abortions, at least in the first trimester, would be unfair in the direst sense of the word. Even as I became religious, I mentally pushed aside thoughts that all humans might have God-given eternal souls worthy of dignity and respect. It became too tricky to figure out when we receive those souls, the most obvious answer being "at conception," as opposed to some arbitrary point during gestation. It was not until I re-evaluated the societal views of sex that had permeated the consciousness of my peer group that I was able to release that internal pressure I felt and take an unflinching look at abortion.

Sex and Creating Life

Growing up in secular middle-class America, I understood sex as something disconnected from the idea of creating life. During my entire childhood I did not know anyone who had a baby sibling; and to the extent that neighborhood parents ever talked about pregnancy, it was to say they were glad they were "done." In high school sex education class, we learned not that sex creates babies, but that unprotected sex creates babies. Even recently, before our marriage was blessed in the Catholic Church, my husband and I took a course about building good marriages. It was a video series by a nondenominational Christian group, and the segment called "Good Sex" did not mention children once. In all the talk about bonding and back rubs and intimacy and staying in shape, the closest the videos came to connecting sex to the creation of life was a brief note that couples should discuss the topic of contraception.

All my life, the message I had heard loud and clear was that sex was for pleasure and bonding, that its potential for creating life was purely tangential, almost to the point of being forgotten. This mind-set became the foundation of my views on abortion. Because I saw sex as being by default closed to the possibility of life, I thought of unplanned pregnancies as akin to being struck by lightning while walking

down the street—something totally unpredictable and undeserved that happened to people living normal lives.

My pro-choice views (and I imagine those of many others) were motivated by loving concern: I just did not want women to have to suffer, to have to devalue themselves by dealing with unwanted pregnancies. Since it was an inherent part of my worldview that everyone except people with "hang-ups" eventually has sex, and that sex is, under normal circumstances, only about the relationship between the two people involved, I was lured into one of the oldest, biggest, most tempting lies in human history: the enemy is not human. Babies had become the enemy because of their tendency to pop up and ruin everything; and just as societies are tempted to dehumanize their fellow human beings on the other side of the line in wartime, so had I, and we as a society, dehumanized what we saw as the enemy of sex.

As I was reading up on the Catholic Church's understanding of sex, marriage and contraception, everything changed. I had always assumed that Catholic teachings against birth control were outdated notions, even a thinly disguised attempt to oppress the faithful. What I found, however, was that these teachings expressed a fundamentally different understanding of sex. And once I discovered this, I never saw the world the same way again.

Burdens or Blessings?

The way I had always seen it, the generally accepted view was that babies were burdens, except for a few times in life when everything might be perfect enough for a couple to see new life as a good thing. The Catholic view, I discovered, is that babies are blessings and that while it is fine to attempt to avoid pregnancy for serious reasons, if we go so far as to adopt a "contraceptive mentality"—feeling entitled to the pleasure of sex while loathing (and perhaps trying to forget all about) its life-giving properties—we not only fail to respect this most sacred of acts, but we begin to see new life as the enemy.

I came to see that our culture's widespread use and acceptance of contraception meant that the "contraceptive mentality" toward sex was now the default attitude. As a society, we had come to take it for granted that we are entitled to the pleasurable and bonding aspects of sex even when we are opposed to the new life it might produce. The option of abstaining from the act that creates babies if we see children as a burden had been removed from our cultural lexicon. Even if it would be a huge crisis to become pregnant, we had a right to have sex anyway. If this were true—if it were morally acceptable for people to have sex even when they believed that a new baby could ruin their lives—then abortion, as I saw things, had to be O.K.

Ideally I would have taken an objective look at when human life begins and based my views on that alone, but the lie was just too tempting. I did not want to hear too much about heartbeats or souls or brain activity. Terminating pregnancies simply had to be acceptable, because carrying a baby to term and becoming a parent is a huge deal, and society had made it very clear that sex was not a huge deal. As long as I accepted the premise that engaging in sex with a contraceptive mentality was morally acceptable, I could not bring myself to consider that abortion might not be acceptable. It seemed inhumane to make women deal with life-altering consequences for an act that was not supposed to have life-altering consequences.

Given my background, the Catholic idea that we are always to treat the sexual act with awe and respect, so much so that we should simply abstain if we are opposed to its life-giving potential, was a revolutionary message. Being able to consider honestly when life begins, to open my heart and mind to the wonder and dignity of even the tiniest of my fellow human beings, was not fully possible for me until I understood the nature of the act that creates these little lives in the first place.

All of these thoughts had been percolating in my brain for a while, and I found myself increasingly in agreement with pro-life positions. Then one night I became officially, unapologetically pro-life. I was reading yet another account of the Greek societies in which newborn babies were abandoned to die, wondering how normal people could do something like that, and I felt a chill rush through me as I thought: I know how they did it.

I realized in that moment that perfectly good, well-meaning people—people like me—can support gravely evil things because of the power of lies. From my own experience, I knew how the Greeks, the Romans and people in every other society could put themselves into a mental state where they could leave a newborn child to die. The very real pressures of life—"we can't afford another baby," "we can't have any more girls," "he wouldn't have had a good life"—left them susceptible to the temptation to dehumanize other human beings. Though the circumstances were different, the same process had happened with me, with the pro-choice movement and with anyone else who has ever been tempted to dehumanize inconvenient people.

I suspect that as those Greek parents handed over their infants for someone to take away, they remarked on how very unlike their other children these little creatures were: they couldn't talk, the couldn't sit up, and surely those little yawns and smiles were just involuntary reactions. I bet they referred to these babies with different words than they used to refer to the children they kept. Maybe they called them something like "fetuses." A

The author will respond to readers on our blog, July 7 and 8. Visit americamagazine.org/things to submit questions.

Religious Life in the Age of Facebook

Where have all the young people gone?

BY RICHARD G. MALLOY

WHY AREN'T YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN entering religious life today? A long list of answers has been floating for years among vocation recruiters, novitiate staffs and religious communities. Among them: young adults today are commitment-phobic; a "spiritual but not religious" stance makes religious life too constricting; families are smaller and less likely to support someone choosing to enter religious life; the average age in most communities has risen to a point where a young person is actually entering a retirement home, not a novitiate; the church after the Second Vatican Council has failed to inculcate in young adult Catholics a sense of commitment to the institutional church; young women (and some young men) are alienated by the patriarchal and/or hierarchical nature of priesthood and the church; celibacy is incomprehensible in our overly sexualized age; the horrific and pervasive evidence of sexual and financial scandals in the church makes the young look elsewhere as they choose professions and careers; there are deep intellectual and cultural confusions over the meaning(s) of God, Jesus, church, salvation and priesthood.

The list could go on, but the facts remain: in 1965 there were 45.6 million Catholics and 48,992 seminarians in the United States studying for the priesthood, while in 2006 there were 69.1 million Catholics and only 5,642 seminarians. Similar or more severe declines have been registered in the number of people becoming men or women religious.

After 15 years of interacting with college students (the past five years living in a student dormitory), I can identify certain cultural currents running through the lives of young adults. Like riptides, hidden but strong, these pull persons in their 20s far from the shores of religious life. Such cultural phenomena are off the radar of men and women religious today, mostly because the cultural world of the young people we would hope to attract to our communities differs so much from our own. As a cultural anthropologist, I was taught that good fieldwork reveals what everyone knows but no one in the host culture talks about. What follows are several truths that many young adults know but seldom express to their elders. Some of these cultural currents are not readily apparent to them, though when I have run these ideas by young adults, I have met with wide agreement.

1. One's culture consists of what one knows. Today's young adults do not know very much about Jesus, the church, the faith or religious life. In fact, young adults do not know many things that used to be common knowledge among Catholics, and they often know more about other faiths than they do about their own religious tradition. When one excited young woman ran up to me and exclaimed, "I'm going to study Buddhism. It's so cool!" I said, "Wow. Did you ever think of studying the religion that teaches that God became what we are so we could become what God is"? "Ooh, that sounds cool. What one's that?" she asked. "Catholicism," I answered, the faith in which she had been baptized and confirmed.

Culturally, we are the stories we tell. Too easily we assume that young adult Catholics know who St. Francis or St. Ignatius was, but we assume such at our peril. Today's young adults know Harry and Hermione better than Jesus, Mary and Joseph. One student I spoke to last year thought Vatican II was the name of a pope!

Also problematic are the general intellectual abilities of today's young adults. Most college students today would balk at the workload the Jesuits threw at high school students in the 1970s. In our first year we read the *Documents of Vatican II*; in sophomore year, the Dutch catechism. Today's reading lists for Theology 101 at most universities are decidedly lighter fare. Students will not or cannot plow through Rahner.

This makes the act of intellectually synthesizing the various modes of truth present in Catholic tradition quite difficult for the average student. To argue that analogous conceptions of truth are not equivocal, but in fact more meaningful than univocal truths, stuns young adults, if they can follow the reasoning. To grasp that the Gospel infancy narratives may be true, even though the stories themselves are

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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANDRESR

not historically or scientifically accurate, is a real task for those educated in a culture that leaves little room for nuance. Young adults have intellectual difficulty coming to terms with the intricacies of our faith tradition. In the 1950s and 1960s, older teens and young adults knew what the beatific vision was, and many yearned to see God face to face (1 Cor 13:12); today all we have given them (or all they have paid attention to) is Facebook.com.

2. In the past one entered a novitiate with people who were culturally similar and found the process easy. In the 1950s and 1960s, for example, most seminarians had attended similar Catholic high schools, and most were young adults unencumbered by other life commitments. Entrance was rather easy: you told a member of the order at your school that you were interested in joining, and in most cases you were in. No longer.

Most people thinking of entering religious life today are much older than in previous eras; they are of various ages, and as a group they are more diverse. They are concerned about what will happen to their 401(k) account, cell phone contract, apartment lease, car, dog and more. To enter a novitiate, they are being asked to break off a set of adult relationships and responsibilities that might be five, 10 or 15 years old.

The process too has grown complex. I have taken to describing the process of admission to the Jesuits, for example, as long, difficult and often uncomfortably invasive. We do want young people to "make it." But some are put off by the sheer complexity of interviews, psychological testing and the introduction to prayer and spiritual direction.

3. One's culture is a set of relationships, a base upon which one makes life choices and commitments. Among all their relationships, young adults know few young religious sisters, brothers or priests. A daunting fact of vocation recruitment today is that those doing the recruiting are no longer 10 or 15 years older than the person being recruited; the recruiters are decades older. How many 50-year-olds seek out 75-year-olds with whom to go to a movie or dinner? Why would a 30-year-old want to join a community where the youngest members are 50 or 60? Two recent books, *Googling God*, by Mike Hayes, and *Young Adult Catholics*, by Dean Hoge, reveal how radically different young adults' relationships are, not just with the church, but with much of culture and society, when compared with those of people who came of age in earlier decades.

Also, a study released in 2008 by the Pew Forum indicates that fully one in three Americans who were baptized as Catholics no longer identify themselves as Catholic and increasing numbers of young people choose no religious affiliation at all. This is a significant change from the 1950s and 60s.

4. Young adults live in a media world unfamiliar to most priests and religious. DVD's, Facebook, Myspace, Halo 3, Wii, cell phones, Madden football—these are the constant companions of young adults, as familiar to them as Notre Dame football, "The Bells of St. Mary's" and foreign missionaries were to Catholics of the 1950s and 1960s. When we tell a young person we do not know how to take a picture with a cell phone, we are communicating not only that we are "out of it," but that we fall on the spectrum somewhere between imbecilic and incompetent.

5. Young adults experience gender issues, sexuality and the relational world very differently than most priests and religious. From sexual experimentation in their preteens to cohabitation while in college and to comfort with issues of sexual diversity, the experience of young people has changed significantly in recent decades. A president having an affair in the Oval Office? That was front-page news when today's young adults were in middle school. The attitudes of a typical priest or religious on such matters seem anywhere from

archaic and prudish to insensitive and uninformed to young adults whose parents, peers and professors preach not just tolerance but wholehearted acceptance of a wide range of sexualities and lifestyle choices. A church that condemns such sexual choices and practices is seen by a large majority of today's educated Catholics not as prophetic but as narrow-minded and prejudiced.

Many men, socialized in a culture where women are considered equal, are reluctant to embrace a profession that routinely relegates women to second-class status. With women running corporations and universities, serving as Speaker of the House and campaigning to become president of the United States, many Catholics find incomprehensible a church declaration that one cannot even discuss the ordination of women. A cultural worldview that champions the elimination of sexism has little sympathy for a church that enshrines sexism as a practice supposedly instituted by Christ. As we obstinately refuse to ordain women, we are ordaining fewer and fewer men. The two phenomena may be more closely linked than we realize or are willing to admit.

> Today's young adults know Harry and Hermione better than Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

6. Issues of money and race are significant but rarely discussed in religious communities. More and more young adults say they must work off a crushing student debt before they can even consider entering religious life or getting married. Recruiters from the founding religious orders of many Catholic institutions find that potential candidates from these same schools often take as much as a decade to pay off their student loans, making it difficult for them to consider the possibility of a vocation.

Other sensitive issues concern race and class. Many religious orders are overwhelmingly white and decidedly upper-middle-class in taste and temperament. Latino and African-American Catholics who look into religious orders in the United States see communities where contemporary music is unknown, ethnic foods are rarely served and communication styles reflect middle-class backgrounds. Prospective candidates who grew up in homes where incomes were near or below median family income are often put off by the L. L. Bean lifestyle of some male religious. On the other hand, young women from semi-affluent backgrounds cannot imagine how they could survive on the meager stipends most religious women receive for personal spending, often much less than $100 a month. When I told one Jesuit that median family income in the United States was $48,200, he denied it and argued, "If that were true, how could people afford to go to our schools?" His reply showed a social and cultural myopia often present in our communities.

A study of "best practices" of those religious institutes that have successfully accepted and integrated persons of diverse backgrounds would be helpful. The Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, of which I am a member, counts only three African-American Jesuits as members and no Latinos from poor inner-city families. Both a Latino from Camden, N.J. (per capita income $12,739), and a Georgetown graduate from adjacent Cherry Hill, N.J. (per capita income $38,284), will face cultural challenges when trying to form community in a novitiate.

7. American society may not be producing people who are able to live religious life. Perhaps more problematic are the cultural deficiencies of American upper-middle-class families. In *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids* (2007), the psychologist Madeline Levine describes children (often from economically comfortable families) who are in deep emotional distress. One young woman Levine describes is a "cutter," who wears a long-sleeved T-shirt with a thumbhole in the sleeve. She is covering up a forearm into which she has repeatedly carved the word "empty" with a razor. Too many of our young are empty. The anorexic cheerleader; the star football player contemplating suicide; the nerdy genius at Stanford filled with a numb, nameless rage because she did not get into Harvard; the aimless young man living in his parents' basement with only video games to look forward to; the legion of others who suffer from "failure to launch." If these are in deep distress, how much better off are the young adults who are "making it"? Problems ranging from serious addictions to attention deficit disorder permeate the young adult population. Older novitiate programs did not have to deal with these, at least not on the level or with the frequency that they do today.

NONETHELESS, THERE IS SOME HOPE. Whenever I find myself wondering about the viability of religious life in the United States or the future of the church, I read up on the history of the church at the end of the 15th century. Do we think things look bad now? Then popes were presiding over sexual intrigues and murders in the Vatican. The little friar Savonarola was setting the match to the "bonfire of the vanities," until he himself became fuel for the flames. Corruption was rampant in the church. Yet in the wake of that era there emerged St. Ignatius Loyola, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Ávila. May our troubled times produce such sanctity. A

Cheering for Change

A young feminist embraces the pro-life cause.

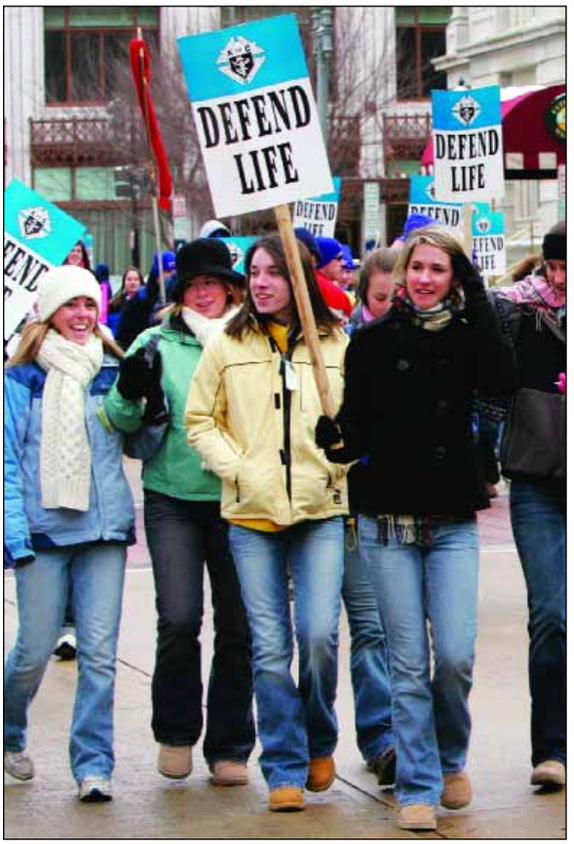
BY SHANNON CROUNSE

EVERY YEAR I TRAVEL to Washington, D.C., to walk in the March for Life. As a woman who is pro-life, I never take this trip or walk that walk without encountering a controversy that affects me deeply. One year, as we marched down the Mall, I found myself face to face with a small group of protestors waving signs and chanting a slogan: "Anti-woman, anti-choice!" Seeking to end legal abortion, they seemed to be saying, was equivalent to hating women. And they sincerely believe that abortion must remain legal so that women can have the freedom to make their own decisions.

Yet I am a young woman, free to make my own decisions, and I am pro-life. And I am certainly no woman-hater.

Many of my friends are not pro-life; one of them even volunteered at Planned Parenthood during college. (When I was a student at Fordham University, I would pray and protest in front of the buildings where she worked.) Some of my friends are pro-life for religious reasons, because their church says abortion is a sin. They are right, I think, but I am not pro-life simply because my church holds that position.

Why am I pro-life? The fundamental reason is that I believe that at the moment of conception a unique life has been created. As a woman, I feel that it is a privilege to carry a new life. This may, at times, interfere with other plans we women have for our bodies and our own lives. Yet the unique life created inside us should not be punished or treated as inferior simply because it has not grown to its full potential yet. I have not grown to my full potential yet either; none of us has. Each of us began in the same way, in our mother's womb, and regardless of whether our life was planned, intended or wanted, every life has significant worth and value. Does it make sense that we should protect some of these lives and not others?



Young pro-life advocates leave the MCI Center after a rally and Mass and make their way to the annual March for Life in Washington.

PHOTO: CNS/BOB ROLLER

I recently graduated from college and have embarked on a business career in hope of securing a comfortable and successful future for myself. As a strong woman with many gifts, I am eager to see what life has to offer. I am also proud to be living at a time when I can be treated as an equal in the workplace with men. But the fact that I defend the rights of the unborn does not mean I am somehow opposed to the freedoms of other women. It is important for women to realize that authentic feminism comes not from destroying the life created within us, but from embracing our unique opportunity to carry and deliver a human being from the moment of creation into full life in the world.

It seems obvious to me that no woman desires to have an abortion. Because of circumstances or lack of resources, however, women are sometimes left with no other choice. If we truly care about empowering women, we should seek to understand what drives a woman to take the life of her child. Why can't we provide every pregnant woman the support and encouragement she desperately needs?

At the March for Life, I sometimes meet older women whose life experience is very different from my own. When they were my age, they picked sides in the abortion debate when it seemed to require a fierce ideological commitment. Today, the political waters are more muddied. The older women I encounter seem puzzled when I say that I am a big fan of the organization Feminists for Life, or that I would consider voting for a pro-choice candidate. I realize it is quite possible that the health and social initiatives proposed

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by pro-choice candidates could, in the long run, help to reduce the number of abortions. Yet my conversation partners don't always see things this way.

Over the years, I have learned a lot about the pain of abortion and the negative effects it can have on women. When I first started developing my pro-life views, I saw the issue as black and white, but I have come to see the grayer shades. Now I try to look at the issue from the perspective of a pregnant woman. The decision to carry a child to term is surely a very difficult one for many women, one that can at times lead to rejection and even violence. While I remain committed to the protection of unborn life, I long to see greater compassion for women and for children following birth. The credibility of the pro-life movement rests on its willingness to fight for life at all stages and ages.

Many Americans, if not most, agree that abortion should be rare, but our society does not do nearly enough to support the women who make the noble decision to continue their pregnancy and raise their children. Many organizations that provide housing and medical care for pregnant women go unnoticed. Yet if we mean to respect life in a real way, it is crucial to provide for women during the difficult times before and after the birth of their child. The pro-life movement has recognized the importance of such work and has begun to devote more resources to helping women in these circumstances. It is also a wise move politically, a rare initiative that could win the endorsement of both parties.

This year's March for Life was another inspiring occasion for me and many of those who marched. Once again, it was a young people's event, with high school and college students from all over the country. Surely it tells us something that the pro-life movement continues to attract the young, and that 35 years after Roe v. Wade the arguments of the pro-choice movement have still not taken hold among many of us. For me and many of my friends, the march is a happy occasion; it instills in us an enthusiasm that energizes us throughout the year. We do not go there to protest or to shout angry slogans, but to cheer for the possibility of change. We are not anti-woman, or even antichoice. Instead, we are on the side of life. A

‘Christ, Come Quickly’

Exiles

A Novel

By Ron Hansen

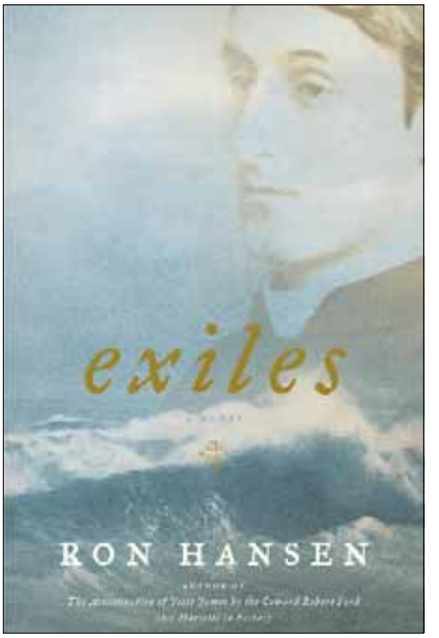
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 240p $23
ISBN 9780374150976

It is commonly accepted that Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., was a depressed and frustrated oracle, an artist whose lyrical talents were stymied at many turns by his religious superiors, a morose and fragile genius who achieved recognition as a wordsmith only years after his unfortunate and early death. His career can be summed up in his famous lament that “birds build—but not I build; no, but strain,/ Time’s eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.”

A vivid reputation, to be sure, and one that has persisted through many decades even as Hopkins’s poetic fame has grown. But was it ever true?

In Ron Hansen’s well-wrought historical novel *Exiles*, the reader encounters a different Hopkins: a poet who finds the supposed constraints of Jesuit life an occasional boon to his creative impulses and who draws fecundity from the spare soil of a life of asceticism and contemplation. Also an exile, to be sure, as Hopkins was in almost every setting of his 44 years, but hardly the wasted and thwarted talent of popular lore, in which Hopkins is reduced to the despairing author of the “terrible sonnets” of his later years. In *Exiles*, Hopkins needs nothing more than a Jesuit superior’s gentle prodding to inspire a return to poetry.

Hansen intersperses his tale of Hopkins’s composition of his famous poem, “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” with embellished accounts of the lives of five German nuns who were among the 157 victims when the Deutschland foundered at the mouth of the Thames river in 1875, and works around those narratives to give us Hopkins’s life story as well. It is an enormous amount of material to cram into barely 200 pages, precluding treatment of many themes that might make up a more comprehensive biography, but Hansen’s flair for the portentous



moment and ear for dialogue help fill some of these gaps. He also includes the text of “The Wreck of the Deutschland” itself in an appendix, providing valuable context for quotations in the novel as well as for Hansen’s own sly use of Hopkins’s turns of phrase.

In other novels, such as *Mariette in Ecstasy*, *Atticus* and *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*, Hansen has demonstrated his interest in exiles and those living on the fringes of society. *Exiles* embraces that pattern again, giving close biographical details (some of them, in Hansen’s phrase, “fiction based on fact”) for the nuns on the Deutschland who have been driven from their home by Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* and are headed to America to start new lives. In his portraits of these five distinct women Hansen also accomplishes some subtle literary wizardry: they are described not only in the authoritative voice of the author but also in terms of the perceptions they have of themselves and of their fellow travelers. In the course of their individual journeys, each adopts certain roles vis-à-vis other members of their community, consciously or unconsciously, and begins to take on the characteristics attributed to her by her peers.

Hopkins, too, was a kind of exile throughout his life: a Catholic convert in an Anglican land; a bookish scholar at home with Robert Bridges and John Henry Newman, who worked in various country parish churches and raucous classrooms; an Englishman who spent his final years teaching in a Dublin he never truly considered home. But neither Hopkins nor the nuns are too tortured in Hansen’s account; while we know their fates before the novel begins (a serious problem in fiction grounded in historical reality), we meet them not as tragic figures only but as real, complicated people with idiosyncratic personalities and their own histories, which go far beyond a few lines in a salacious newspaper story or a compendium of 19th-century poetry.

Hansen depicts Hopkins, still a seminarian at the time of the Deutschland tragedy, as an odd but well-liked fellow with an ascetical bent (he had abandoned his poetry years before, burning much of it in what he wryly called “the slaughter of the innocents”). He was captivated by the intricacies of language, even (alas) by puns, and was much taken with the foreign sounds and rhythms of the Welsh spoken in the villages around St. Beuno’s, his home in Wales during theology studies. These pedestrian influences, Hansen hints, may have had as much to do with the curious structure of “The Wreck of the Deutschland” and Hopkins’s later poetry as his more celebrated theories of inscape and instress.

Nowhere is this fine book better than in Hansen’s retelling of the wreck itself, the result of fog-induced navigational error followed by endless rough seas that prevented a quick rescue. In his suspense-

Listen to an interview with Ron Hansen at americamagazine.org/podcast.

The Reviewers

James T. Keane, S.J., is an associate editor of **America**.

Wayne A. Holst teaches religion and culture at the University of Calgary in Canada and at St. David’s United Church in that city.

Kevin M. Doyle is an attorney who has spent the past 17 years defending capital cases in Alabama and New York.

ful account of the increasing desperation of passengers and crew, who first thought their accident a minor inconvenience, Hansen recounts in vivid detail a harrowing progression from carefree tea parties all the way to frozen corpses clinging to masts, an inundated ship and the slow succumbing to the wet cold by passengers with the words of Christ on their tongues.

Hansen has written elsewhere that he admires Hopkins in part for his ability to "imitate in poetry the operations of the mind and spirit at a heightened moment of graced perception," and allows both the poet himself and Hopkins's literary subjects such grace—in Hopkins's poem, one sister dies crying, "Christ, come quickly"; in Hansen's account, another dies realizing that their exile is "not from Germany, not from Europe, but from Paradise, from Heaven." There is no question that Hopkins himself experienced many moments of graced perception, and not just in the course of writing "The Wreck of the Deutschland." In the closing pages of this novel, we see Hopkins in such a moment on his deathbed, as his final words provide a curious contrast to the reputation he would gain after his death: "I am so happy." ***James T. Keane***

Post-Western Awakening

Disciples of All Nations

Pillars of World Christianity

By Lamin Sanneh

Oxford Univ. Press. 384p $19.95 (paperback)
ISBN 9780195189612

A skilled author can introduce ideas that change a reader's consciousness. In *Disciples of All Nations*, Lamin Sanneh delivers just that.

Before engaging directly this important book, let me briefly digress to illustrate such a "perspective changing" moment from personal experience.

Forty years ago, as a young missionary serving in Trinidad, West Indies, my awareness was transformed after reading the book *Capitalism and Slavery*, by Eric Williams. Williams—a black Trinidadian academic—was the first prime minister of this newly independent nation. I was

attracted to his views and read his revisionist interpretation of why Britain had abolished the slave trade throughout its empire during the 1840s.

The author argued that slavery was repealed because it had become an economically barren system, not because of any heightened ethical standard on the part of the British. Economics, not justice, was the decisive factor that forced a change of policy. Challenging the common historical wisdom of the day, Williams theorized that systemic slavery continued only so long as it proved to be economically feasible.

Though I knew little about economics, Williams's book opened for me a new way of viewing reality. For the first time I was reading history interpreted by "the other." Williams, whose ancestors had themselves been slaves, was giving me a fresh perspective on the demise of slavery. He revolutionized my consciousness and deepened my understanding.

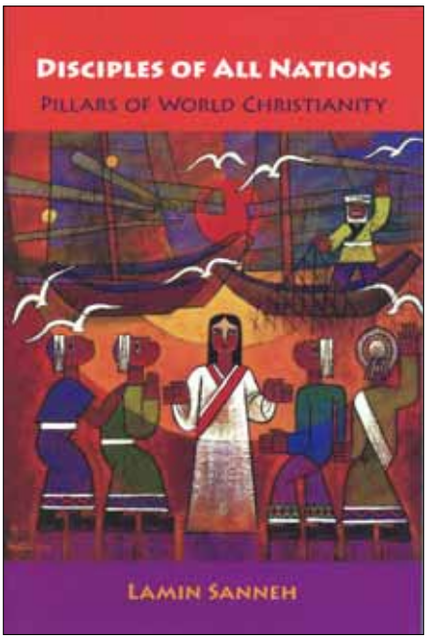
In similar fashion, *Disciples of All Nations* challenges common Euro-American thinking about the nature and future of the faith. Sanneh powerfully re-examines the roots of a "post-Western Christian awakening" in a postcolonial world. A Gambian by background (now a naturalized American), he teaches history and world Christianity at Yale University. He was a Muslim before converting to Catholic Christianity. As a lay theologian he brings an African, early-life Muslim perspective to an enthusiastic convert's apologia for Christian faith.

Much of what Sanneh describes in this paradigm-shattering book was not supposed to happen like this. Christians of the two-thirds world were not supposed to be grateful for the gift that they had received from those missionaries who frequently "collaborated" with plundering imperialists.

The small Christian offspring/remnant of the colonial missionary enterprise was supposed to disappear into irrelevancy and not become the foundation for new Christian cultures in Africa and Asia. New Christians in many places were not supposed to attend to and be shaped by local "independent" prophetic figures who knew little of the 2,000-year-old Christian tradition but served as bridge-builders between indigenous traditions and the new faith.

Apparently, in God's economy, things do not always turn out as we hope or fear they will.

For several generations a great shame has enshrouded churches in the West because of what many of us have come to believe was an unseemly and abusive liaison between colonialism and the modern Christian missionary movement. The



author, whose African heritage includes both colonialism and Islamic faith, transcends both our guilt and his need for retribution; and his writing serves a different purpose.

"I am urging a revisionist history," he says, "without claiming that mission and colonialism were not in cahoots.... In many places there was, without question, co-operation between them, with missionaries supporting military force where necessary to support and defend their work. The story of Catholicism in the New World and elsewhere makes that clear. But Catholicism was not the sole culprit.... Although missions fell from their high moral calling by engaging in slavery and the slave trade," he continues, "they also transcended them by creating communities of faithful converts."

The evidence reveals a more nuanced picture of what really happened. There were, in fact, many forms of missionary service as well as diverse and unpredictable indigenous responses.

A great deal of what we think happened is inaccurate, Sanneh claims. The ecumenical churches have been too pessimistic about mission and interfaith relations. Now living and working among us, Sanneh wants to revise the story from the perspective of "the other."

I came away from reading this book with a new sense of hope for Christianity as a truly global faith. In spite of the many flaws in the process of "transplanting" the Good News over the last centuries, the genuine message was indeed translated meaningfully and effectively. It is time for us in the former "sending" churches to let go of both our guilt and our need to control, recognizing that the Spirit of God is free do its work.

The author challenges and transforms many of our long-held perceptions, and in so doing he does for us now what Eric Williams did for me four decades ago—even though Sanneh's philosophy and manner are more conciliatory. From the beginning, notes Sanneh, Christians saw their faith as having global implications. Now, in our post-colonial world, that dream is truly coming to pass.

In considering where Christianity is moving in terms of its new global nature, he uses terms like "diversity," "innovation," "adaptation" and "diffusion." History teaches that there will be times of impetus and setback, improvisation and re-engagement.

Sanneh focuses on several missionary visionaries who worked for the de-institutionalization of mission. He provides case studies showing how different parts of the world (like Africa and China) are being drawn into the Christian orbit and gives special attention to Islam and indigenous religions—as well as secular approaches like Marxism and new nationalistic challenges.

Amid all this confusing diversity, Sanneh is hopeful, because he believes the greater movement is toward unity, not division. "Post-Western Christian hatchlings," he points out, "may be able to offer a lesson for the West about the spirit of mutual bonding as part of Christianity's contribution to the worldwide human family."

Faced with many testimonies to these developments, readers must choose their reading wisely. Sanneh would be a good choice, not least because of his irenic skill as a transformer of consciousness.

Wayne A. Holst

The Rhetoric of Racism

The Race Card

How Bluffing About Bias Makes Race Relations Worse

By Richard Thompson Ford

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 400p $26
ISBN 9780374245757

As I write, New York City awaits reaction to this morning's non-jury acquittal of three police detectives charged in the death of a young black man killed in a hail of gunfire outside a Queens strip club. The young man was hours away from getting married and, despite police suspicions, proved unarmed. Minutes before the verdict, Mayor Michael Bloomberg felt obliged to profess both confidence that there would be post-verdict calm and readiness for any disturbances.

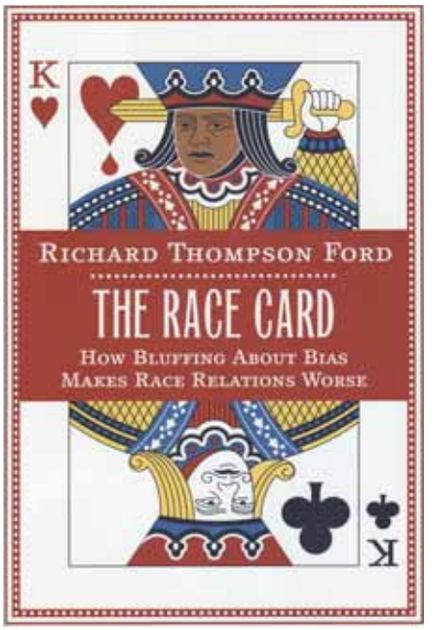
Maybe the mayor believed that much of the public naturally situates every "bad shooting" case within a grim, shameful, grief-ridden history of oppression. Or maybe Mayor Mike simply knew to hedge against the risk of some opportunists exploiting racial alienation. Richard Thompson Ford, author of *The Race Card: How Bluffing About Bias Makes Race Relations Worse*, could appreciate either perspective.

The Race Card aims to recast how Americans talk about race and racism and to make racial discourse less scandal-centered and less accusatory. Perhaps Oprah Winfrey's failure to gain entry into a Parisian Hermès store at closing time is not a great bellwether of racial tolerance. Racism certainly played into New Orleans's post-Katrina horrors; but the immobility of poor black citizens and their housing in the most flood-prone areas was largely the work of racists long gone (as is the gross overrepresentation of young black males in our criminal courts, prisons and morgues).

This latter phenomenon—"racism without racists"—accounts, by Ford's lights, for a "large and growing share of racial injustice in our society." Such injustice, to be sure, requires redress. Yet we need to see "social problems that demand social solutions—not individual misdeeds that demand excoriation and individual reparation."

Fixing blame rather than righting wrongs, under such circumstances, amounts to an erroneous or overstated allegation of racism. It is the first of four ways Ford describes in which the race card is played, "wolf" is cried and the bonds of credibility become frayed.

The second way Americans play the race card is through "racism by analogy." Those who charge discrimination on account of obesity or unconventional

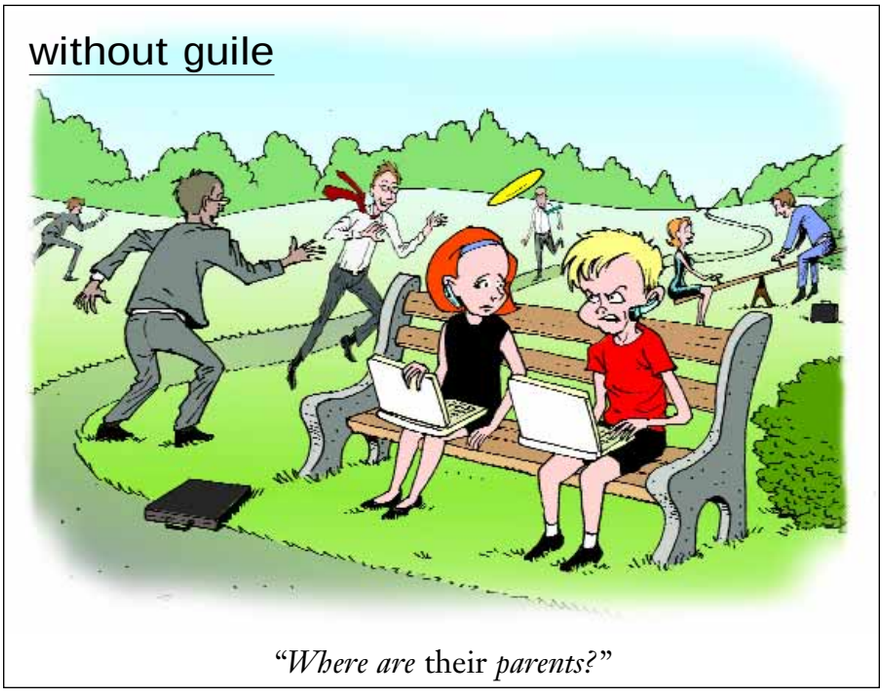


appearance, for instance, misappropriate the civil rights paradigm. "Fat is not the new black"; "[l]egally induced challenges in the standards of beauty...might just give different people the short end of the ugly stick." Race analogists trivialize the suffering of African-Americans and even jeopardize the current consensus against racial discrimination.

Fluidity and confusion as to definitions of discrimination and goals of affirmative action are the other sources of trouble. The "racist" label carries the same pungent stigma whether attached to the most hateful, overt discrimination or stamped on an otherwise good-faith policy with a disparate racial impact. Affirmative action, when deemed an instrument of "diversity" rather than a tool of integration and assimilation, makes easier the facile charge of "reverse discrimination," the right's favorite race card.

There is much to recommend in *The Race Card*. Ford writes with breadth, energy and well-aimed wryness. A law professor at Stanford, Ford puts to rest forever one wag's notion that a lawyer's prose will "resemble a cross between a nineteenth-century sermon and a treatise on higher mathematics." Even Ford's discussion of case law that delineates different forms of discrimination sweeps the reader along.

Ford does not carry water for any particular political faction or ideological camp. He critiques in every direction. He does not flinch when such luminaries as



"*Where are* their *parents?*"

CARTOON BY RICK PARKER

Alice Walker or Cornel West come into his line of fire.

Even in his most tangential moments, Ford delivers. If you harbor vague misgivings toward People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (which compares cattle ranching to slavery), read Ford's brief discussion, and they will crystallize into healthy antipathies.

The Race Card, however, is not without flaws. Ford's discussion of O. J. Simpson's murder trial falters. The case was not "as strong a circumstantial case as one gets," not when key evidence was recovered by a detective who had admittedly framed suspects and employed the N-word as if he collected bonus miles with every invocation.

More broadly, programs to undo the legacies of racists past will frequently bear uncanny resemblance to efforts at plain old distributive justice. For the past quarter-century, our country has increasingly indulged a market fetish and worshiped at the altar of The Self-Made Man. Ford needs to reckon with these lamentable trends.

Finally, Ford correctly insists that we need to put our racial discourse on a broader, more rational footing. Discrete episodes of putative racism rarely offer teaching moments. Instead they serve as shadow-plays interpreted in accordance with individual predilections, prejudices and politics. When in February the Academy Award montage of Oscar hosts omitted four-time host Whoopi Goldberg, it may or may not have had to do with race. Just how likely are we to divine the answer by exploring institutional patterns and individual psyches?

Ford, however, fails to acknowledge just how much anecdote, scandal, "test cases" and purportedly emblematic incidents drive our national discourse in all areas—health care, tort reform, gun control, criminal justice, you name it. This is owing in part to the innate human preference for stories over abstractions, narrative over argument and pictures over concepts. It also owes something to a culture in which citizen-consumers insist that everything be made entertaining and easy to digest. One wonders how readily Americans will knuckle under for some hard, honest, humble thinking on our oldest and most intractable problem.

Kevin M. Doyle

Classifieds

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HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE—Holy Week 2009. April 2-13, led by Rev. Roger Hessian of the St. Paul and Minneapolis Archdiocese. Call Director, Margie, at (800) 644-4659 for information.

Positions

DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF CATECHETICS AND INITIATION, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, Me. The Director of the Office of Catechetics and Initiation is responsible for the ongoing development of the mission and ministry of catechetics and initiation within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland. The Director strives to provide a comprehensive and integrated catechesis, vision and process for parishes/clusters of the diocese in the area of catechetics and initiation based on national norms and directives. The Director also fosters the goals and objectives of the *National Directory for Catechesis* and the *General Directory.* Candidates must hold M.A. in theology, ministry, religious education, pastoral studies or related field, practicing Roman Catholic, solid praxis in theology and Roman Catholic traditions, five years' experience in parish catechetical ministry and initiation process, solid background in adult catechesis, the catechumenate and lay ministry, knowledge of adult learning, leadership skills, excellent communication skills, budget experience, management experience, ability to travel. For a complete role description see our Web site: www.portlanddiocese.net. Cover letters and résumés can be sent to: Teresa A. Schulz, Diocesan Director of H.R., Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, 510 Ocean Avenue, P.O. Box 11559, Portland, ME 04104; e-mail: tschulz@portlanddiocese.net.

DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, Me. This position initiates, develops, oversees and facilitates various programs and services that formulate and communicate the vision of youth and young adult ministry. The Director provides support to pastors and their staffs in carrying out their responsibilities to meet the pastoral needs of the young church through the diocesan pastoral plan. Candidates must hold an M.A. in theology, pastoral ministry, religious studies or related field, practicing Roman Catholic, five years of experience with youth and young adult ministry, leadership and organizational skills, excellent communication skills, experience managing professional and volunteer staff, experience with budgets. For a complete role description, see our Web site: www.portlanddiocese.net. Cover letters and résumés can be sent to: Teresa A. Schulz, Diocesan Director of Human Resources, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, 510 Ocean Avenue, P.O. Box 11559, Portland, ME 04104; e-mail: tschulz@portlanddiocese.net.

DIRECTOR, St. Catherine of Siena Center, Dominican University. Dominican University is a comprehensive Catholic university of approximately 3,300 students organized into the Rosary College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, the Brennan School of Business, the School of Education, the Graduate School of Social Work and the School of Leadership and Continuing Studies. It is located 10 miles west of Chicago in a beautiful residential community.

Dominican University in River Forest, Ill., invites applicants for the position of Director of the St. Catherine of Siena Center. The Siena Center conducts educational, community-oriented programs that engage the Catholic Dominican tradition with critical contemporary questions for the benefit of the university community, professional ministers and the wider community of faith. The Director's responsibilities include development of programs, selection of speakers, marketing, administration and fund raising. An advanced degree is required.

Full job description at http://www.dom.edu /contact-us/jobs. Send cover letter, résumé and three references to: Dominican University, Human Resources, 7900 West Division Street, River Forest, IL 60305; e-mail: hr@dom.edu. Dominican University is an equal employment opportunity employer seeking applicants from underrepresented groups.

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE, West Islip, N.Y. Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, overlooking the Great South Bay and 30 miles from New York City, is a 450-bed, acute care hospital of Catholic Health Services of Long Island. The full-time Director of Pastoral Care will join a team of professional chaplains and be responsible for program development, fiscal management, planning, implementation, direction and evaluation of spiritual care services to patients, families and staff. Qualifications: N.A.C.C./A.P.C. board certified chaplain, at least three to five years' clinical pastoral experience in a health care setting, along with excellent management, clinical, interpersonal and leadership skills. Please apply at www.good-samaritan-hospital.org.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CHURCH, Lindenhurst, N.Y., is seeking a full-time COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY. Qualifications include college degree or equivalent in youth ministry; two to three years' experience. Ideal candidate will be dynamic in reaching out to teens and have a solid background in Catholic faith. Organization and good communication skills are important. Music/liturgy background a plus. Salary commensurate with experience. Includes medical benefits. Send résumé and cover letter to: Rev. James Stachacz by e-mail to: jtstack@gmail.com; or by postal mail to: Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 210 S. Wellwood Ave., Lindenhurst, NY 11757.

PRESIDENT, Xavier High School, New York City, N.Y. Founded in 1847, Xavier High School is an independent Jesuit Catholic college preparatory school dedicated to providing a rigorous and challenging education to young men of promise in the New York metropolitan area. Serving 935 boys in grades 9-12, Xavier endeavors to produce graduates who are persons of competence, conscience and compassion—"men for others." Among the school's signature offerings are its Junior R.O.T.C. and Christian service programs.

Located two blocks from Union Square, Xavier offers a dynamic urban environment for a diverse student body. More than $1 million in financial aid was awarded this year. Annual Giving topped $3.3 million last year, and the school's last capital campaign raised $14.9 million. The school is debt-free and has a $25 million endowment.

The President is the chief executive officer of Xavier High School and a member of the Board of Trustees; responsible for the direct supervision of the Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations, the Business Office and the physical plant; and, by delegation to the Headmaster, responsible for the well-being and operation of the educational programs of the school.

Xavier is seeking an energetic and visionary leader with exceptional skills in administration, fundraising and strategic planning. The President must be a practicing Catholic who understands and embraces the tenets of Jesuit education to which Xavier is dedicated.

Wickenden Associates is conducting the search for July of 2009. Call (609) 683-1355, or visit www.wickenden.com to request the complete position description and details of the application process. Application deadline: Sept. 5, 2008.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY DIRECTOR. The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay, Wis., is seeking a full-time Youth and Young Adult Ministry Director. This position will be responsible to foster the evangelization of young people in the age range between grade school and 35 years old under the supervision of the Director of Evangelization and Worship. This person must embrace the mission and core values of the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay and work in accordance with Catholic social teachings and the moral values of the Catholic Church. Qualifications required include a master's degree in theology or related area (or pursuing the same) plus a minimum of five years' experience in the field. Position requires awareness of the developmental theories of youth and young adults and their application to the ministry required. The responsibilities of this position are divided approximately 50% to youth (high school and younger) and 50% to young adults (18 through

35). Must have a good working knowledge of applicable Church documents on young people, be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the church and hold a valid driver's license. Position requires outstanding communication, interpersonal and leadership skills, along with proficiency with computers, specifically the Internet. If interested in this position, please send cover letter and résumé by Friday, July 25, 2008, to: Barbara Wiegand, Human Resources Coordinator, St. Luke Benefit & Insurance Services Corp., P.O. Box 23825, Green Bay, WI 54305; Ph: (920) 437-7531; e-mail: hrcoord@gbdioc.org.

Retreats

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BETHANY SPIRITUALITY CENTER, Highland Mills, N.Y., located one hour northwest of New York, near bus, train and airport. Property includes lakefront cottage and two lakefront hermitages. Retiro Predicado, Aug. 3-10; Silence and Awareness Retreat, with Kevin Culligan, O.C.D., and Mary Jo Meadow, O.C.D.S., Aug. 15-24. "Your Story, Sacred Story," with Margaret Silf, Sept. 26-28, and "Dreaming, Desiring, Despairing, Discerning, Discovering," with Margaret Silf, Sept. 29-Oct. 3. Please visit http://www.bethanyspiritualitycenter.org or call (845) 460-3061.

Training Program

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION TRAINING PROGRAM, at Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center, begins Oct. 13, 2008. Consists of eight weekly sessions held quarterly over a two-year period (2008-10). The program will take place at Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center, located on a beautiful 780-acre rural campus in Maple Mount, Ky. Participants receive intense training, practice and supervision. (270) 229-0200. E-mail: kmccarty@maplemount.org. Visit: www.msjcenter.org.

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Letters

A Guarantee

Thank you for "The Forgotten," by Pierre de Charentenay, S.J. (6/9). The fate of Iraqi Christians should be as important to humanity as was the fate of Muslims in Sarajevo in the early 1990s, and their tragedy should inspire the same solidarity around the world, especially from the liberals and progressives who were so actively involved in the Balkan dramas. As de Charentenay rightly notes, the survival of Christians in Iraq (like the survival of moderate Muslims in Bosnia) is the guarantee that people of different faiths and origins can live together.

Jean-Paul Marthoz
Brussels, Belgium

A Parent's Perspective

As a parent of an incarcerated African American youth, I agree that the Second Chance Act is a logical step toward reducing recidivism ("A Small Light in Prison Darkness," 6/23). As the editorial illustrates, housing, financial resources, jobs and health care are all critical to making the transition back into society. I would encourage lawmakers to consider also other, more modest steps at reform, such as restoring voting rights for felons, removing questions on job applications that ask for previous arrest histories and providing federal subsidies for those ex-offenders interested in obtaining an education or an F.H.A. loan.

Through current policies ex-offenders are continuously punished even though they have served their time. Such ongoing punishment relegates members of our society to second-class status and does not lead to reconciliation.

Steven Rubio
Baltimore, Md.

Moral Isolation

Thank you for Jeffry Odell Korgen's report on the decision of Catholic groups to part ways with Amnesty International because of its position on abortion ("End of a Partnership," 6/23). I always worry about Catholics isolating themselves from the world based on their moral perspectives. I think if I were to isolate myself from all friends, relatives, organizations and companies that did not measure up

Letters

to my Catholic beliefs, I might wind up being a monk on a deserted island. I think we should engage the world on its own terms while attempting to live the life that Jesus expects. How else will it ever change?

Tom Rutledge
Boulder, Colo.

Same Argument, Another Case

I was struck by a contradiction in your issue of June 23. Doug Kmiec (Current Comment) finds other, more effective ways to lower the number of abortions that do not require criminalization. Those of us who support Amnesty International (see "End of a Partnership") think the same argument applies in our case.

Jean Leary
Othello, Wash.

A Lawyer's Fate

Before Vatican II, standard moral theologians like H. Noldin, S.J., and A. Schmitt, S.J., taught that it would be wrong to deny Communion, because no one knows whether a person is in a state of grace. The alleged sinner might have made a perfect act of contrition. The priest who denied Communion to the lawyer Doug Kmiec should be given leave by his bishop to reflect on the church's regulation binding all ordained to stay out of politics. But in defense of the rogue priest, may I quote from Shakespeare's "King Henry VI": "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers."

J. Van Damme
London, Ont., Canada

Immigrant Fears

Karen Sue Smith's article "Courting the Latino Vote" (6/23) is very thorough and nuanced. The oft-stereotyped Hispanic is quite complex in the way he or she votes.

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But I do not think Ms. Smith sufficiently treated the consequences of the immigration reform bill bitterly debated in the Senate more than a year ago. The immigrant community that I know feels very intensely the repercussions of that vote. They live in unease and often in fear. Our state's U.S. senator, Elizabeth Dole, has enlisted the local sheriffs to crack down on all immigrants. They are stopped as they drive on the highway to see if they have a license and if they are "illegal." Our state is one of the states that are "in play" in this year's election. The Senate decision on immigration reform and its consequences will definitely affect our state and thus the national election.

Joseph Madden, O.F.M. Conv.
Pittsboro, N.C.

Latino Candidates

In her article "Courting the Latino Vote" (6/23), Karen Sue Smith writes, "Obama has the support of Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico, the first Latino of any major party to run for president." Though Senator Obama may have the support of Governor Richardson, Governor Richardson was not the first Latino of any major party to run for president. That distinction belongs to Benjamin "Ben" Fernandez. In 1978, Mr. Fernandez declared his candidacy for the Republican nomination. During the 1980 primary election, he campaigned in 40 states. Mr. Fernandez was the first chairman of the Republican National Hispanic Council, later called the Republican National Hispanic Assembly.

(Deacon) John Montalvo III
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Give Me Hot or Cold

One can hardly disagree with what John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., says about the two talks, one by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright and the other by the Rev. Michael Pfleger ("Pulpits and Politics," 6/23). However, a line from "Dead Man Walking" comes to mind: "A man is more than the worst thing he has ever done." I grew up in St. Sabina Parish in the 1940s and 50s. Predominantly Irish, it was a vibrant, active parish that drew young people from all over.

A few weeks ago I visited St. Sabina's after many years. It is still the vibrant, active parish that I remembered, largely because of Father Pfleger.

The problem with preaching in Catholic churches today is not that it is controversial, silly or an ego trip for the preacher. Rather, it is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm and lifeless. May God send us more Wrights and Pflegers, even if they do come up with some doozies now and then.

Ernie Basile
Romeoville, Ill.

If Only…

After reading "Return to Our Roots" (5/26), by Robert F. Taft, S.J., I hesitate to offer even a minor quibble, particularly when it involves Father Taft's generous assessment of the contributions of the Eastern churches to Western liturgical reform. Nevertheless, I would take some exception to his assertion that "in the East the Liturgy of the Hours has remained what it was meant to be, an integral part of the worship of God's people." Would that it were so!

No doubt, Father Taft's global experience offers many encouraging examples in support of his view. Generally, however, here in the United States many factors seem to be working against the very survival of the Liturgy of the Hours in parishes of the Byzantine liturgical tradition.

Outside of Holy Week, there seem to be few occasions when a parish liturgical calendar will include any of the Liturgy of the Hours, apart from an occasional celebration of Matins or Vespers. There also seem to be few times, except at Easter, when the Office of Matins is celebrated with congregational participation, even on a Sunday. Vespers, too, except in conjunction with a handful of major observances in the liturgical cycle, does not seem to be a regular part of ordinary parish worship.

In my view, no single factor accounts for the atrophy of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Byzantine (mainly

The Word

The Prodigal Sower

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A), July 13, 2008

Readings: Is 55:10-11; Ps 65:10-14; Rom 8:18-23; Mt 13:1-23

"A sower went out to sow" (Mt 13:3)

ART BY TAD DUNNE

JESUS WAS A MASTERFUL and effective storyteller. He talked about nature and everyday life, used short stories as vehicles for teaching about God's kingdom and got his listeners to think about it. Today we begin a series of three Sunday readings from Jesus' Parables Discourse in Matthew 13. They add to Matthew's portrait of Jesus as the wisest teacher of all.

Most of Jesus' parables concern the kingdom of God. By its nature that kingdom is transcendent (because it belongs to God) and eschatological (because its fullness is in the future). As limited humans we can only catch glimpses of transcendent and eschatological realities like God's kingdom. As a wise teacher Jesus meets people where they are and tells them thought-provoking stories about what was his central theme.

One of the major audiences for Jesus' parables were Galilean farmers. They knew all about sowing seeds and waiting for the harvest, as Jesus describes it in the parable of the sower. What would have surprised them in the story was how prodigal (in its positive sense of extraordinarily generous) the sower was in casting the seed: he sows abundantly in all kinds of soils. Even more surprising are the results. While the first three soils yield little or nothing, the seed sown in the good soil yields remarkably productive harvests.

Praying With Scripture

- Why are parables an effective instrument for teaching about God's kingdom and other spiritual matters?
- What picture of Jesus' ministry emerges from the parable of the sower?
- What is the scope of God's kingdom according to Paul?

Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God prodigally in word and deed. He did so for all to hear and see—rich and poor, wise and simple, respectable and suspect. Many paid no attention, while others rejected him and his message. But those who did listen and did accept him and what he had to say have been (and will be) marvelously productive in assimilating and communicating Jesus' words about the kingdom. That is what matters most.

Today's Old Testament readings confirm the positive thrust of Jesus' parable. According to Isaiah 55, God's word does not go forth and return without having its intended effect. Likewise, the beautiful description of the agricultural cycle in Psalm 65 affirms that when God's word goes forth, it does not come back empty. In both cases agricultural imagery describes the effect of God's word.

In the allegorical interpretation attached to Jesus' parable of the sower, there is nothing wrong with the sower (Jesus) or the seed (his message). The problem comes with those who reject his message (the bad soils) and the obstacles that prevent them from receiving it: their lack of perseverance, the lure of worldly desires and the influence of Satan.

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Ukrainian and Ruthenian) parishes in this country. Perhaps some of the liturgical scholars who have benefited from Father Taft's expertise can try to gauge the effects on Byzantine liturgical life in the United States not only of language changes, revisions in liturgical books and uncertainties about deacon-led and lay-led liturgical prayer, but also of the myriad sociological and economic factors in the lives of the various Byzantine churches.

T. F. Stock
Arlington, Va.

All Together Now

Robert F. Taft, S.J., could well be right that "Communion from the tabernacle" destroys the "symbolism of a common partaking of a common meal" ("Return to Our Roots," 5/26). And yet it has always seemed to me that, Jesus Christ being the same yesterday, today and for all time, Communion from the tabernacle brings the community of the present together with the people of the past and future.

Phyllis Ann Karr
Barnes, Wis.

Off the Cuff

An otherwise well-done review of E. J. Dionne's book *Souled Out* (6/23) was marred by a comment that raises a question about the reviewer's bias.

"At the parish level, a pamphlet listing 'five non-negotiable issues' that should determine Catholic votes was widely distributed by a shadowy organization in California."

Why not name the organization, which I presume to be Catholic Answers, and if this organization is "shadowy," let us know how the reviewer came to such a conclusion.

Such off-the-cuff remarks diminish the intellectual integrity of **America**.

Richard DeSpirito
Downingtown, Pa.

The second installment of Paul's reflection on life in the Spirit according to Romans 8 places the sufferings of the present time in the larger context of hope for the future fullness of God's kingdom. Then Paul reminds us that the glory for which we hope is not only individual and communal but also universal and cosmic, in the sense that it involves all creation. We who enjoy the "firstfruits of the Spirit" await in hope the definitive redemption that will come with the fullness of God's kingdom.

Mustard, Wheat and Weeds

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A), July 20, 2008

Readings: Wis 12:13, 16-19; Ps 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16; Rom 8:26-27; Mt 13:24-43

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed…" (Mt 13:31)

TODAY'S SELECTION from Matthew 13 continues Jesus' Parables Discourse. It contains two short parables—about a mustard seed and yeast—and a long parable with an allegorical interpretation—about the wheat and the weeds. All three parables explicitly propose to tell us what the kingdom of God (or heaven, as Matthew prefers) is "like."

In the parable of the mustard seed the primary point of comparison is the contrast between the smallness of the seed and the greatness of the result ("the largest of plants"). The kingdom of God in its fullness will be like that great shrub, despite its small beginnings in the present. Those small beginnings are Jesus' preaching and his miraculous actions, all in the service of God's kingdom. The process of growth remains somewhat mysterious; it is in God's hands. In the parable of the yeast the primary point of comparison is again the contrast between the small amount of yeast and the large batch of bread that its mysterious action can produce. And again the small beginnings (in Jesus' ministry) will produce great results.

Praying With Scripture

- What do the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast contribute to your understanding of God's kingdom?
- What does the parable of the wheat and the weeds add?
- Do you let the Holy Spirit help you in your prayer? How?

The longer parable of the wheat and the weeds resembles last Sunday's parable of the sower in form and content. It comes with an allegorical interpretation and deals with the mixed reception given to Jesus and his teaching about God's kingdom.

When a householder is informed by his servants that both wheat and weeds are growing in his field, he instructs them to wait until the whole crop is fully grown; only then will he separate the good wheat from the noxious weeds. While this parable also contrasts small beginnings and great results, it reminds us that it is God's prerogative to bring about the fullness of the kingdom, and that God will do so in God's own way and time. Moreover, it stresses the idea of hostility and opposition to God's kingdom in the present, and develops the theme of the final judgment (or harvest) when God will separate the good from the bad. The allegorical explanation appended to the parable develops an apocalyptic scenario that makes even more explicit what is already in the parable.

As followers of Jesus we look forward in hope to the fullness of God's kingdom, and so we pray, "Thy kingdom come." We also believe that through our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection (the paschal mystery) we have received the "firstfruits of the Spirit." This Sunday's excerpt from Paul's instruction about life in the Spirit in Romans 8 concerns prayer, a major element in any Christian spirituality. Paul boldly expresses the frustration that all serious religious persons feel from time to time: "We do not know how to pray as we ought." But more important, Paul also reminds us that in our prayer the Holy Spirit is present to help us express what we really want to say to God and to ensure that our heavenly Father understands what we want to say in our prayer. This is a most encouraging biblical insight about prayer. ***Daniel J. Harrington***

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