America

Nov. 24, 2008

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

$2.75

1909 America's CENTURY 2009

Mary Ann Glendon and the Art of Diplomacy

Doris Donnelly

John A. Coleman on Olivier Messiaen

Franco Mormando on the Art of Rouault

Of Many Things

SEEING THE THRONGS of men, women and children in Chicago's Grant Park cheering the nation's first African-American president-elect; hearing civil rights lions like Jesse Jackson, John Lewis, Roger Wilkins and Andrew Young grope for words when describing their feelings about the election; listening to black schoolchildren on television express in simple phrases what Barack Obama's achievement meant to them; watching replays of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. declaim "I have a dream" on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; and downloading videos of jubilant crowds in the Nairobi slums chanting a Kenyan surname over and over—all this made me think of a passage from the New Testament: the Magnificat.

Fifty-six million voters did not vote for Senator Obama; some reports claim that almost 50 of the 267 active U.S. Catholic bishops stated that it was a grave sin (some called it cooperation in murder) to cast a vote for the Illinois senator; many priests warned parishioners against making such a choice; and millions of Catholics, even if they did not agree with their pastors, did not vote for Obama because their overall political views were more closely aligned with those of Sen. John McCain.

But were there many Christians, even Obama opponents, who watched their African-American brothers and sisters weeping tears of jubilation and pride, whose hearts were unmoved by the transformation among a people who had suffered for so long? Many must have heard echoes of Mary's words in the Gospel of Luke: "He has...lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things...." In Mary's song of praise, God visits an oppressed people and restores their fortunes "according to the promises he made to our ancestors."

The civil rights movement sprang from African-American churches that believed God would rescue the poor, that the Spirit would lead them and that Jesus loved them. Dr. King used familiar biblical imagery—in particular, the exodus of the Hebrew people out of Egyptian slavery—to call a community to hope in the face of fear. "One day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together," he said in 1963, paraphrasing Isaiah. This is prophetic language. It looks ahead to the "one day" when God's justice will set things right.

But who would have thought that the upending of the status quo would happen so quickly? Robert F. Kennedy, for one. In 1968 Senator Kennedy said, "Things are moving so fast that a Negro could be president in 40 years." It must have seemed outlandish at the time. Five years earlier, Dr. King had been arrested in Birmingham. And just a year earlier, riots in Newark and Detroit had stripped the country of hope. But the prophet sees that some day "one day" will be today.

John LaFarge, S.J., adverted to this hope in one of his most popular books. Father LaFarge, a longtime editor of **America**, was deeply involved in interracial issues in the 1930s, when Robert Kennedy was still a boy. In *The Race Question and the Negro*, published in 1943, he examined the perils of racism and confidently concluded that even someone infected by prejudice will "by the logic of his own principles and by the light of his own experience...come to this road at long last."

That is why the scenes in Grant Park were so moving. The "one day" had come "at long last."

Despite the passionate rhetoric used to describe Mr. Obama, he is neither a messiah nor the anti-Christ. But his election is a sign that believers downplay only if they wish to downplay God's activity in the world. It is a sign that the "lowly" can be lifted up—to previously unimaginable heights. That the "hungry" can be filled with the nourishing food of jubilation, pride and hope. That the valleys shall be exalted. That the mountaintop is a real place.

Not every Christian rejoiced in the election results. But every Christian who knows the Gospels, even those who disagree with Barack Obama's politics, can be gladdened to see this particular sign of progress. "We rejoice with the rest of our nation," wrote Archbishop Donald T. Wuerl of Washington, D.C., "at the significance of this time."

For this sign our souls should magnify the Lord. ***James Martin, S.J.***

America

Published by Jesuits of the United States

Editor in Chief
Drew Christiansen, S.J.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Managing Editor
Robert C. Collins, S.J.

Editorial Director
Karen Sue Smith

Online Editor
Maurice Timothy Reidy

Associate Editors
Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J.
George M. Anderson, S.J.
Dennis M. Linehan, S.J.
James Martin, S.J.
James P. McDermott, S.J.
Matt Malone, S.J.
James T. Keane, S.J.
Peter Schineller, S.J.

Literary Editor
Patricia A. Kossmann

Poetry Editor
James S. Torrens, S.J.

Assistant Editor
Francis W. Turnbull, S.J.

Design and Production
Stephanie Ratcliffe

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

Publisher
Jan Attridge

Chief Financial Officer
Lisa Pope

Marketing
Eryk Krysztofiak

Advertising
Julia Sosa

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

Cover art Mary Ann Glendon, U.S. ambassador to the Vatican (CNS photo/Giancarlo Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo)

www.americamagazine.org Vol. 199 No. 17, Whole No. 4836 November 24, 2008

Articles

This week @ America Connects

Two musicians discuss the spiritual power of Olivier Messiaen's music on our podcast. Plus, a video and slideshow featuring the art of Georges Rouault, and Mary Ann Glendon on the new feminism. All at americamagazine.org.

Giving Thanks, 2008

We can give thanks for many things this year. The election of the first African-American president is a significant step toward the elimination of racism in our country. The peaceful transition of power, even in parlous times, is an enduring symbol of the strength of the American political system. But hopeful signs were not restricted to the political sphere. Pope Benedict XVI, during his trip to the United States in April, surprised even longtime critics by his compassionate meeting with sexual abuse victims, his stirring homilies and his warm touch with the crowds. And for those in the City of Brotherly Love, the World Series finally turned out just right. (Tampa Bay readers may feel less grateful.)

Still, is it possible to give thanks in such frightening times? With each passing day economists deploy ever more alarming adjectives to describe the world economic crisis. Here in the United States, we are fighting two wars, expensive in both lives and dollars, are crippled with a colossal debt and are beginning to see employee layoffs and drastic cutbacks in consumer spending. Can we be grateful in the face of so many woes?

Yes. One reason that St. Ignatius Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises asked believers to begin their daily "examination of conscience" with gratitude was this: We often feel so swamped by the problems of the day that we forget to "taste" the gratitude. Thanksgiving is a time to savor more than just the turkey, stuffing and cranberry sauce. It is a time consciously to "give thanks to God our Lord for the benefits received," even in the midst of turmoil—perhaps especially in the midst of turmoil.

Zimbabwe's Affliction

Suffering grows for Zimbabwe's ever more impoverished population. The inflation rate stands as the highest in the world. Together with the rise in global food prices, a country that was once known as the breadbasket of Africa now experiences severe hunger. The United Nations has predicted that half the population will need food aid by January 2009. An estimated one million children have lost one or both parents, many because of AIDS.

The human rights record there remains abysmal. In the wake of last March's general elections, and the subsequent runoff on June 27 between 84 year-old Robert Mugabe and the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai, state-sponsored violence has led to the murder and torture of thousands suspected of favoring the opposition party. Mr. Tsvangirai himself was beaten and tortured in election-related violence. International pressure has led to a power-sharing deal between the two leaders of the new unity government, signed in mid-September. It has no provision that would allow for the perpetrators of the violence by security forces to be exempt from prosecution, so prosecution would be possible. Such a move, however, could jeopardize the fragility of the power-sharing between the two parties, Mr. Mugabe's Zanu-PF and Mr. Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change. Still unresolved is who has control of various ministries, especially Home Affairs, which controls the police. Both leaders were looking to the 15-member Southern Africa Development Community to resolve the political impasse, but at its meeting on Nov. 8-9, the group failed to produce a mutually agreeable solution. The humanitarian and political crisis continues to deepen.

The New Media Presidency

Did Tina Fey, with her spot-on "You betcha!" imitation of Gov. Sarah Palin, swing the presidential election? Did Will.i.am's viral "Yes We Can" video help jump-start Barack Obama's campaign? How many young voters did Facebook attract? Did Senator Obama's texting news of the choice of his running mate increase interest?

It is hard to say with certainty. What is certain is this: the 2008 election was the first in which the new media, loosely defined as anything outside the traditional press, television or radio, had a significant influence on the outcome. Portents were seen in Howard Dean's failed 2004 campaign, where staffers used Web sites like Meetup to gather together young supporters and raise amounts of cash that were surprising at that time. This year both candidates aimed to capture young voters with the help of new media, and by using newer forms of the old media, for example, through appearances on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report," whose mock news programs often yielded more substantive results than their more established counterparts. (Katie Couric's "old media" interview with a tongue-tied Palin, however, was a hit on YouTube.) But there is a dark side. Harper's magazine highlighted several videos produced by Senator McCain's more shadowy supporters that sowed doubts about Obama's religion, patriotism and even birth certificate.

Barack Obama was elected in part because the majority of Americans liked his brand of leadership and liked him. Many found out about both through new ways, which—along with other media not even dreamed of—will be a permanent part of the ever-changing political landscape.

Editorial

Mr. Obama's Promise

THE ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA as the 44th president of the United States affords our country a chance to reverse its dismal standing in the world. The opportunity comes not a moment too soon. A recent opinion survey of America's most trusted allies, carried out by eight leading international newspapers, revealed that after eight years of the George W. Bush presidency, America can no longer count on the friendship of even its closest neighbors. Only a minority of citizens in the countries surveyed, which included Canada, Britain, Mexico and France, described their country's relations with the United States as "friendly." In Britain, arguably America's closest ally, over 65 percent of those surveyed said their view of the United States is worse or much worse since President Bush took office in 2001. In France and Canada, that number is more than 70 percent.

During the campaign Senator Obama acknowledged this global discontent, saying, "These are not the best of times for America's reputation in the world," while promising the American people and the world that the intransigent, America-first foreign policy of the Bush years would give way to a new approach based on "real strength and vision." If Mr. Obama is to make that vision a reality, he must overcome a daunting set of challenges: two wars (one nearly universally unpopular, both draining the United States and its allies of blood and treasure), a global economic crisis and a planet in ecological peril. Yet Mr. Obama can take some dramatic steps in the next several months that would help to meet these challenges and reverse world opinion.

Mr. Obama's choices for secretary of state and a new ambassadorial corps should signal a renewed commitment to engagement and public diplomacy and should indicate that the inflexibly ideological and self-interested policies of the current administration are relegated to the recycling bin of history. His selections for these posts should be men and women of ability and standing, professionals with the expertise in global diplomacy that the times require and who are not chosen simply to appease a wing of the party or to reward a generous political donor. This was too often the approach of the Clinton administration, which generally regarded foreign affairs as an afterthought. Mr. Obama took pains to say during the campaign that Mr. McCain's election would amount to a third term for President Bush. Mr. Obama should ensure that his administration does not resemble a third term for Mr. Clinton.

Though Mr. Obama's inaugural address will likely and appropriately focus on domestic concerns, he should not ignore foreign affairs. In fact, he should use the address to renounce unambiguously the Bush doctrine of preventive war. He should also unequivocally state that the United States will never again engage in the torture of its enemies, nor in semantic gymnastics in order to avoid illegality. An executive order closing the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, which has become a notorious stain on the nation's honor, should quickly follow. Mr. Obama should also revive national support for a stronger, reformed United Nations system that can respond more effectively to the "duty to protect" crises that increasingly occupy global diplomacy in the 21st century—for example, in Myanmar, Darfur and eastern Congo.

ABOVE ALL, THE UNITED STATES REQUIRES new approaches to the world's seemingly intractable problems. Mr. Obama indicated during the campaign that he would meet with the leaders of some of the world's authoritarian regimes without preconditions. This approach involves the kind of inventive thinking America's diplomacy now requires. Yet Mr. Obama must be careful to balance engagement with realism. The Iranian nuclear standoff, relations with neo-imperial Russia, balancing economic and environmental concerns in our relations with China, facing down the warlords and endemic poverty in Africa, rebuilding the nuclear nonproliferation regime, kick-starting the Mideast peace process and redesigning international financial institutions will require sustained, multilateral and multidimensional solutions. Success will depend on coalitions built in a true spirit of strategic partnership, an uncommon occurrence in world affairs, and one that will also demand sacrifice.

Mr. Obama claimed during the campaign that he was the best choice because of his experience and expertise in bringing people together, raising not only our hopes but also the hopes of the world. "Obama represents something different," Klas Bergman, an official at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, recently told The Guardian newspaper. "He seems ready to listen rather than dictate. That he's African-American only adds to the mystique." Long after the mystique has faded, as it inevitably will, let us hope that Mr. Obama's potential has been fulfilled and the new era of international cooperation he has promised will have begun.

Pope Pius XII's Contributions 'Overlooked'

Pope Pius XII and his teachings represent for the church an "exceptional gift for which we must all be grateful," said Pope Benedict XVI during an audience on Nov. 8 with participants of a congress titled "The Heritage of the Magisterium of Pius XII." Excessive attention to Pope Pius XII's role during World War II has overlooked the rich and "precious heritage" he left to the church and Christians today, the pope said.

Pope Pius XII writes one of his wartime Christmas radio messages using a typewriter at the Vatican in this undated photo.

Pope Pius, who led the Catholic Church from 1939 to 1958, has been criticized by some Jewish groups, who have said he did little to mobilize the church in defense of Jews during the period of the Second World War. Other experts have gathered evidence to show that he worked quietly but effectively to save the lives of thousands of Jews and others during World War II and the Holocaust. The International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, holding its 20th conference in Budapest on Nov. 11, has expressed its deep regret over certain polemical and intemperate statements that have been made over the controversy.

The matter is one of great concern in the discussion of Jewish-Christian relations. Cardinal Walter Kasper and Rabbi David Rosen, co-chairs of the I.L.C., the convened body of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and the I.C.J.L.C, declared: "We reiterate our commitment to a relationship based on mutual respect and sensitivity. Disagreements between us, which inevitably occur from time to time, must always be expressed in a manner that reflects this spirit and not in language that only exacerbates tension."

Cardinal Kasper noted that the concerns of the Jewish community have been clearly conveyed to the Holy See at the highest level. Ten days ago, the request was made by the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations at a papal audience with Pope Benedict XVI that all archival material be made available for independent scholarly review before any far-reaching decisions are made by the Holy See concerning persons and policies during the period of the Second World War.

Organized by the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences and Rome's pontifical Lateran and Gregorian universities, the Nov. 6-7 congress commemorated the 50th anniversary of Pope Pius's death by highlighting his teachings and influence on the Second Vatican Council, which began four years after he died in October 1958.

Armed Men Kidnap Two Nuns in Kenya

Two Italian nuns were kidnapped Nov. 10 in northeastern Kenya near the border with Somalia, the Vatican newspaper reported. L'Osservatore Romano identified the nuns as Sister Caterina Giraudo, 67, and Sister Maria Teresa Oliviero, 61, both from Cuneo, Italy, where their religious order, the Contemplative Missionary Movement of Father Charles de Foucauld, is based. The newspaper said the women had been working for years with Somali refugees in Kenya. Members of the Kenya Red Cross Society told authorities the nuns were taken by a group of armed men, who also stole three vehicles. Father Pino Isoardi, head of the Contemplative Missionary Movement, told Vatican Radio that the nuns, like all the members of the group, "share their lives with the poor. We don't have any big structures. We welcome into our homes the sick, the aged, people who are starving." As of midafternoon Nov. 12, the kidnappers had not been in contact with the congregation, he said.

Pope Condemns Trafficking in Human Organs

While organ donation is a generous act of love, the sale and trafficking of organs is abominable and must be condemned, said Pope Benedict XVI. "Tissue and organ transplants represent a great advance of medical science and are certainly a sign of hope for the many people who suffer from serious and sometimes critical medical conditions," he said. But the low number of vital organs available for transplant is "dramatically real" as seen by the long waiting lists of people whose only hope for survival is "linked to meager supplies which do not correspond to actual needs," he said Nov. 7 in a private audience with some 500 participants attending a Vatican-sponsored gathering on organ donation. The Nov. 6-8 congress, titled "A Gift for Life: Considerations on Organ Donation," was sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life, the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations and Italy's National Transplant Center.

Continued Pain Over Kristallnacht

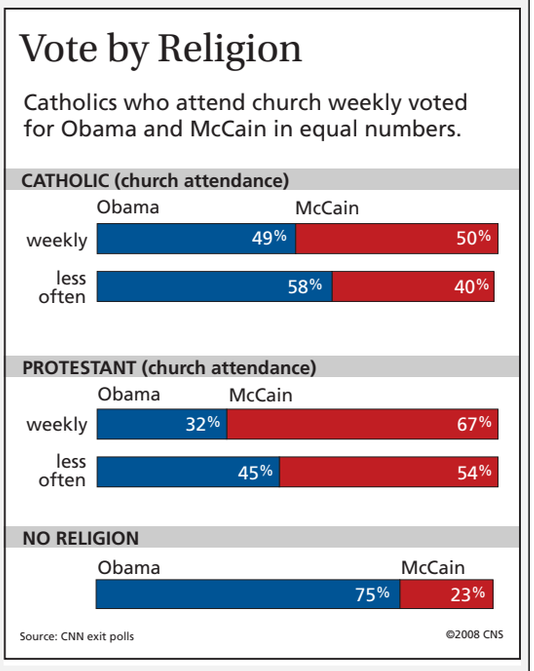
Pope Benedict XVI said he still feels "pain for what happened" in his homeland in 1938 when Nazi mobs went on

the rampage against Jews, an event that became known as Kristallnacht. The pope was 11 years old when, on the night of Nov. 9, 1938, "the Nazi fury against the Jews was unleashed in Germany," he said. Marking the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht—"Night of Broken Glass"—the pope asked Catholics to pray for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and he condemned all forms of anti-Semitism. Pope Benedict spoke about the anniversary during his midday Angelus address on Nov. 9 at the Vatican.

During Kristallnacht, throughout Germany "stores, offices, homes and synagogues were attacked and numerous people were killed, initiating the systematic and violent persecution of German Jews that concluded with the Shoah," or Holocaust, the pope said. "I still feel pain for what happened in that tragic circumstance, whose memory must serve to ensure that similar horrors are never repeated again and that we commit ourselves, at every level, to fighting anti-Semitism and discrimination, especially by educating the younger generations in respect and mutual acceptance."

Role of Religion in Presidential Election

The leader of the Knights of Columbus said one reason why Barack Obama won the presidential election may be that he was more forthright than John McCain concerning his religious beliefs. "Senator Obama gives every impression of being serious about his religion, that religion is important to him, that Christianity changed his life," Carl A. Anderson said Nov. 6 at a news conference preceding a speech in Columbus. "Perhaps he made a stronger case for that than John Kerry or Al Gore [the losing candidates in the preceding two presidential elections] did. I don't believe Sen. McCain made quite the same case as President [George W.] Bush did in his two elections and President Reagan did earlier," said Anderson, supreme knight of the 1.75-million-member international organization of Catholic men. Anderson, who was a presidential assistant during the Reagan administration, said this does not mean the Democratic senator from Illinois is a better Christian than his Republican opponent, but that Obama made a stronger public presentation of his faith, while "McCain was more reticent about it."



Christians, Muslims Call for Religious Freedom and Tolerance

Christians and Muslims must work together to protect religious freedom, they must learn more about each other and they must witness to the world the reality of God, said members of the Catholic-Muslim Forum, which was held in Rome to discuss their faiths' understanding of the obligation to love God and to love one's neighbor.

The final statement said both Christians and Muslims recognize the dignity and sacredness of human life because each person is "created by a loving God." Christianity and Islam teach that love for God and genuine faith lead to love for one's neighbor, it said, and "genuine love of neighbor implies respect of the person and her or his choices in matters of conscience and religion." Religious minorities deserve protection, they have a right to their own places of worship and their sacred figures and symbols "should not be subject to any form of mockery or ridicule," the leaders said. In an increasingly secularized and materialistic world, forum participants called on Catholics and Muslims to give witness to "the transcendent dimension of life."

The forum participants, 28 Muslim and 28 Catholic representatives, met at the Vatican on Nov. 4-6 .

Pope Benedict XVI greets Mustafa Ceric, the grand mufti of Bosnia Herzegovina, during a session of the Catholic-Muslim Forum at the Vatican on Nov. 6.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

In the Frame

'We all inherit a particular window on God and eternity.'

PERHAPS IT IS THE CHILLY autumn air that awakens the urge in me to travel back to my roots, to the soil that nurtured my father, grandfather and great-grandfather. It has been nearly three decades since I made a journey back to the lanes and farmsteads of these left-but-never-forgotten homelands.

The little village where my father's family has its roots has hardly changed at all. The irrigation dikes still flow through these flatlands, brown and slow, alongside the sandy Lincolnshire fields. The hedgerows where we played as children still stand untroubled by the passage of time, and the village still has fewer than 500 inhabitants.

I used to sleep in a small bedroom tucked into the end gable of my grandmother's bungalow in this village, and I could look out of its tiny window, barely a foot square. I used to gaze out of this window for a few minutes every morning when I woke up and every night before I went to bed. Over the years those quiet moments became sacred for me in ways I only recognized when time and circumstance had distanced me from them.

It was such a very small window, yet it contained such a very large view. To my child's vision, its compact little frame held nothing less than the universe: an expanse of brown furrows that seemed to be the very highway of my life, a network of irrigating dikes and a line of poplars, providing the horizontal axis and drawing my gaze to the distant horizon. In the center of the view was my aunt and uncle's farmstead, standing proud against the sky, braving whatever the heavens might bring of threat or promise. The sun always set behind the farmstead, and it made my evening peace.

I am as old now as my aunt and uncle were when they farmed "the homestead." I have traveled the world and made friends on every continent, while they spent their years within a few miles' radius of the view from this little window. Yet I feel a moment's trepidation as I ring the bell of the house that now stands where my grandmother's cottage once stood and where my remaining relatives still live. Will they even recognize me after all these years? Will they welcome the prodigal cousin who arrives unannounced at their door?

I need not have worried. The door opens, and my cousin Pat lets out a cry of delighted amazement. "Margaret. What a wonderful surprise! I was thinking about you just this morning." I fall into a loving embrace and know I am home. I know it because I can feel the sap of life rising up from these roots, through the lives of all my forebears, through my own life and on into the lives of generations still to come.

Soon after this visit to my childhood haunts, I am exploring a 500-year-old Tudor mansion in northwest England, and something the guide says triggers once more my memories of the little window in my grandmother's cottage. Windows, she tells us, were very expensive in Tudor times, very much a status symbol, and a sign that the house owner was a person of substance. They were so highly prized that they were often individually bequeathed on the death of the owner. Imagine inheriting a window! The guide smiles, as she reflects on the problems that would arise if the house and the windows were not left to the same recipient.

Yet I think we all inherit "windows." We all inherit a particular window on God and eternity from the spiritual tradition and culture in which we grow up. The windows that define our personal view are tiny, framed by our own "threescore years and ten," but they can open up a view much larger than their own narrow dimensions. They invite us into a particular "point of view," about the world, and God and life, but what we do with this point of view is another matter. We can let it draw our minds and hearts beyond itself into an awareness of possibilities beyond our dwelling-place, or we can allow it to narrow down our souls into rigidity, forbidding our imaginations to venture beyond the window frame.

Our windows are the attitudes and opinions we inherit from those who have gone before us, but every window on the world is just one particular way of looking at things, one particular viewpoint. The window on the other side of the house would yield a different view. The windows in quite different houses would apparently reveal a different world entirely. And yet the reality beyond the window is all one, a coherent whole, fragmented only by our individual ways of looking at it.

In these troubled and uncertain times, we may well be tempted to retreat behind our windowpanes and narrow down our vision to the tiny fragment of reality that we feel we can understand and control. Yet the Gospel invites us not only to look beyond our own immediate viewpoint but to open the windows of our souls wide, to welcome the vision that beckons us beyond ourselves toward God and one another. Left to ourselves, we will choose the narrow confines of security. But the Gospel is all about risk and challenge and trust. It is an open window, not a solid wall.

This week especially, as millions of people make their journeys home to their roots and sit once more with their kinsfolk gazing out on familiar landscapes, we remember the journey of our own lives and give thanks for all that has brought us to this moment—or our personal window on the world. It contains all that has made us who we are. It beckons us toward all we might become. And above all, it welcomes us home with the enduring glow of love.

Margaret Silf

MARGARET SILF lives in Staffordshire, England. Her latest books are *Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living* and *The Gift of Prayer.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

Mary Ann Glendon on the art of diplomacy

Soft Power and Hope

– BY DORIS DONNELLY –

MARY ANN GLENDON was sworn in as the ambassador of the United States to the Holy See on Feb. 14, 2008. Meeting her in June at the residence of the U.S. Embassy on the Gianicolo Hill in Rome, I understood firsthand why the Senate confirmed her as ambassador as quickly as it did. She combines an impeccable professional résumé with a gracious, unaffected personal elegance. Ambassador Glendon met me at the portico before we moved to a more comfortable setting, where we spoke with ease and openness.

Mrs. Glendon is also the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard University and an expert on international human rights and comparative constitutional law in the United States and Europe. Her list of publications is yards long. In 1994 Pope John Paul II appointed her to the newly created Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences; 10 years later he appointed her its president, marking the first time a woman had been named as president of a major pontifical academy. She is also the first woman to lead a Vatican delegation to a U.N. conference. In 1995, Pope John Paul II appointed her to head the 22

DORIS DONNELLY is director of the Cardinal Suenens Center in Theology and Church Life at John Carroll University in University Heights, Ohio.

members representing the Holy See at the Conference on Women in Beijing. Mrs. Glendon is married and the mother of three daughters.

How did you become ambassador to the Holy See?

I became an ambassador, funnily enough, just as I was in the midst of writing a book about people who were torn between scholarship and politics. I was at home, putting the finishing touches on a chapter on John Locke, when the phone rang. Karl Rove was calling from the White House and asked if I would like to be the ambassador to the Holy See, and I said yes. I probably should have said, "I'll think about it," or "Tell me more about the position," but instead I just said, "Yes, I would like that." Because I was raising three children in the years when such professional opportunities usually come along, I had more or less thought, well, you can't do everything in life, and so I never thought about the possibility of something like this happening at this time.

> I don't think that there has ever been more synergy of interest between the United States and the Holy See than there is now.

What book were you writing?

It's called *The Forum and the Tower*. It's a book of biographical essays about people who were struggling with the push and pull of whether to go into politics or to stick with philosophy or scholarship or charitable works, or vice versa—people like Plato, Machiavelli, Edmund Burke, Max Weber, Alexis de Tocqueville, Eleanor Roosevelt, John Locke and several others. Many of the people I'm writing about thought they were destined for one thing and ended up doing something else. There probably will be 12 chapters. I was working on Chapter Six when the call came from Washington.

And Plato, didn't he always want to be a philosopher?

Few people know that Plato came from a political family. He assumed that his destiny was politics. He tried four times to go into politics and failed spectacularly each time, first in Athens and then in Syracuse. So philosophy for him was a second choice, which turned out to be a great thing for the world.

Do you have a job description?

Since I come from an academic environment, I am trying to put my background in international studies and human rights to good use in public diplomacy. So I am devoting a fair amount of time to organizing several conferences on aspects of human rights that are of particular concern to both the United States and the Holy See. That seems to me a fitting way to celebrate the upcoming 25th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See, which is on Jan. 10, 2009, one month after the 60th anniversary, on Dec. 10, 2008, of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The conferences scheduled for this year include: a roundtable on the fight against all forms of human trafficking, a forum on the challenges to the universality principle, a forum on what Pope Benedict calls the American model of "positive secularism" and a forum showcasing the "one laptop per child" initiative as a way of bringing to life the right to education. And we are probably going to have a conference on philanthropy, because there is so much interest in Europe about the role that private giving plays in the United States, as distinct from thinking of humanitarian aid as just something that only governments do. We had our first conference in May, where we lifted up the Latin American contributions to the post-World War II human-rights project. Two Latin American embassies co-sponsored it, many attended it, and now the papers are being distributed all over Latin America.

I'm thinking of your book* A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *What was Mrs. Roosevelt's basic understanding of human rights?

Mrs. Roosevelt understood that where human rights are concerned culture is prior to law. That understanding was shared by most of her colleagues on the U.N.'s first Human Rights Commission, but she was the one who expressed it best: "Where, after all, do human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.... Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

You have said that the United States and the Vatican are in agreement with most of the principles contained in the Universal Declaration. Where is the agreement most evident? Where is it strained?

The points on which agreement is most obvious, because

most frequently emphasized by both entities, concern the importance of human dignity and religious freedom. Too little noted, in my view, is their shared commitment to the goal of "better standards of life in larger freedom" for everyone, especially for the most disadvantaged peoples of the world.

A major difference arises from a tendency in the United States to read the declaration as a "list" of rights (like our Bill of Rights), while the Holy See has consistently understood the document's provisions as indivisible and interdependent.

Did the visit of Pope Benedict to the United States in April solidify relations between the Holy See and the United States?

It is unprecedented for the president and the pope to meet not only once but three times in little over one calendar year. This is big news, and I don't think that there has ever been more synergy of interest between the United States and the Holy See than there is now. The three visits are, in a way, outward symbols of the close correspondence between the president and the Holy Father.

Do you suppose when they were alone at their April meeting that they might have discussed Iraq?

I can say a little bit about that because the president did tell me that the day before he met with the pope, he checked with Gen. David Petraeus to get the most up-to-date report on the situation, and he began his conversation with the pope with the latest information. The Holy See's interest now is really similar to that of the United States in that they are very worried about building a stable political order that will protect the rights of Christians and other religious minorities.

How does that look?

It is fragile. Everybody says it is fragile, but significant improvements have been noticed. I don't think anybody wants to predict with certainty that this will last, but things have definitely been improving. The pope gave a wonderful speech to Holy See diplomats in January. I wasn't here because I wasn't yet accredited; but at the end of his speech he said diplomacy is the art of hope, and diplomats must make every effort to discern the rays of hope wherever they appear and however faltering they may be. That's the art of diplomacy, or what is now called "soft power," as opposed to force.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has emphatic words about torture. Have there been conversations at the Holy See about torture in light of Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo?

Yes, there have been conversations with the Holy See. I certainly am not an expert on the subject, but I am not aware of any other country in history that has held itself to as high a standard as the United States has in all the wars in which it has been involved. This does not mean that countries always live up to the standard they set. But just to be even more emphatic, I am not aware of any country that has set for itself such a high standard and that has done as well at living up to that standard as has the United States.

Is the Roman Catholic understanding of human rights distinguishable from rights language in other religions? How universal is human-rights language?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has become, for better or worse, the single most important reference point for cross-cultural discussions of what is owed to human beings simply by virtue of their humanity. But no religion, so far as I know, is entirely comfortable with the language of rights. Popes in recent years have praised the declaration, but at the same time have emphasized the need to maintain the connection between rights and responsibilities, to be on guard against manipulation and to search for ways to place the declaration's small core of fundamental rights on a firmer foundation. The universality principle, and the challenge of maintaining it, will be the theme of an embassy-sponsored forum on Oct. 16 titled "For Everyone, Everywhere."

How distracting or damaging is it for human-rights language to be co-opted as secular by thinkers like Michael Ignatieff?

I would not single out any particular individual in this respect. Rather, I would say that the more the human rights idea showed its power, the more contests were to be expected over the identity, meaning and implementation of fundamental rights. That is why Pope Benedict XVI cautioned in his U.N. speech that "efforts need to be redoubled in the face of pressure to...move away from the protection of human dignity towards the satisfaction of simple interests, often particular interests."

What does a faith perspective add to the discernment regarding intervention in or on behalf of nonsovereign states? Is that faith perspective in play?

The rise in aggression by nonstate actors presents international law and Catholic just war theory alike with novel and difficult problems. As a starting point for reflection, I don't think one can improve upon what Pope Benedict said at the United Nations on April 18, 2008, about "the duty to protect." A government's duty to protect the community for which it is responsible, he said, is at the foundation of all good government, and it was implicitly present in the founding of the United Nations. If a state is unable to fulfill its duty to protect its own citizens, he said, "the international community must intervene"—but only "provided that it respects the principles undergirding the internation-

al order." There's the rub. There are a host of unresolved questions concerning the circumstances under which it is appropriate to intervene.

Is someone at the Holy See looking into the unresolved questions?

This has not come up in my conversations with the Holy Father, but it does come within the purview of the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences, which includes a number of lawyers and political theorists. They are aware that we are dealing with an area where the principles are clear, but the application of the principles to new situations is not. High-ranking officials in the Holy See have suggested to us that it would be helpful to the Holy See if we would have our experts devote attention to these difficult and novel questions.

You have said that conversation about faith in public life takes place in the United States more than in Europe. Where does that conversation most excite you?

What strikes me particularly about the United States, in contrast to Europe, is the degree to which the public square is at least open to religiously grounded moral viewpoints. In the wake of the pope's visit to the United States, many Europeans told us that what impressed them most was the sight on the White House lawn of the leader of a great nation warmly welcoming a great religious leader. For most of them, it would be hard to imagine such an event in their own countries. That event spoke volumes about what the pope calls the American model of "positive secularism." Italians, especially, were impressed, given the opposition that prevented the pope from speaking at La Sapienza University earlier this year.

You are also planning a conference on what the pope calls the American model of "positive secularism." Would you say something more about that?

I don't think that most people know how the American model of religious liberty works. The reason they don't understand it is because even constitutional lawyers have difficulty explaining it in a way that is intelligible to nonlawyers or non-Americans. Church-state law is extremely complicated, so there's a challenge for us now that the pope has praised what he calls the American model. People are asking me as the ambassador, and as a lawyer who does some constitutional and even church-state law, for a brief summary. So I wrote to colleagues who are experts in this field to see whether anyone knew of a primer that would be intelligible to nonlawyers. There does not seem to be one. This is what we are going to attempt in January for our grand finale conference. We're going to elucidate the American model.

Is there a clue you could give us as to how it works?

What attracts a European observer in the model of what Benedict calls "positive secularism" is that you can have a secular state that is not hostile to religion.

If we might return to Eleanor Roosevelt for our final question: How "sell-able" to U.S. women in 2008 is her message that we need "to find how we can best use the potentialities of women without impairing their first responsibilities, which are to their home, their husbands and their children"?

There have been many changes in the status of women since Eleanor Roosevelt made that statement, but many of the challenges remain the same, especially for women who are struggling to balance work and family responsibilities. Today, women and men alike are struggling to find ways to have a decent family life while working in environments where, all too often, they are required to conform to a unisex model in which family life is subordinated to the demands of the job. Broadened to include both women and men, Mrs. Roosevelt's challenge to rethink the organization of the world of work remains as important as ever. A

From the archives, Mary Ann Glendon on the new feminism, at americamagazine.org/pages.

Maestro of Joy

Olivier Messiaen at 100

BY JOHN A. COLEMAN

"WHO SINGS WELL, prays twice," said St. Augustine (and we must never forget that caveat: who sings *well*). Music and prayer have been closely intertwined in the world's great religions, and no one in the 20th century so inextricably linked the two as did Olivier Messiaen, the composer and master organist whose birth centenary we celebrate this year.

A few years ago, when I was interviewed on a program for the Australian Broadcasting Company, the host insisted that I choose a piece of music to be used as background, saying that we would discuss, among other things, why I chose it. I chose Messiaen's "Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps" ("Quartet for the End of Time"), which was originally composed in, and premiered at, Stalag VIII A, a German prisoner of war camp where Messiaen was interned in the early years of World War II.

A piece for piano, violin, cello and clarinet (the only instruments available at the camp), the title refers to the Apocalypse, but it also slyly evokes Messiaen's rhythmic shifts of musical tempo; these combine both tonal and atonal scales, which, following medieval Western chant forms, dislocated rhythm from meter. In many of his best pieces, Messiaen created music that seemed, at times, outside time. Esa-Pekka Salonen, the principal conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, said in a lecture on Messiaen that unlike almost all other Western music—which is mainly dominated by a kind of forward movement, the recapitulation of earlier motifs and crescendo—Messiaen alone, and characteristically, was capable of achieving a kind of timeless and contemplative sheer stopping of time, inhabiting, for a moment, eternity.

As Messiaen once put it: "My music is not 'nice,' it is certain. I am convinced that joy exists, convinced that the

Portrait of Olivier Messiaen, acrylic on panel, 1993 by Tom Phillips

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J., is professor of social values at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Calif.

invisible exists more than the visible, joy is beyond sorrow, beauty is beyond horror." Michael Linton, a professor of music, once said of the quartet that it is "a piece of musical radiance, joy and transcendence" written in the midst of squalor and misery. Throughout his long career as a composer, Messiaen preferred joy to any preoccupation with suffering. This is evident both in his stunning organ piece "Transport de Joie" and his truly astounding and monumental "Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum," which was commissioned by the French government to commemorate the war dead of the World Wars.

Messiaen rarely composed songs commemorating the suffering and passion of Christ, but instead emphasized the rapture of divine vision and joy.

Musician and Mystic

A brief recap of Messiaen's major works shows just how this genuinely mystical, deeply devout Catholic brought music to prayer and prayer to music. Consider some of the following major Messiaen works: "The Ascension," "Ecstasies of a Soul Before the Glory of Christ, Which Is Its Own Glory," "The Nativity of the Lord," "Visions of the Amen," "Twenty Gazes at the Infant Jesus," "Three Small Liturgies of the Divine Presence," "The Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ," "The Colors of the Celestial City," "Meditations on the Mystery of the Holy Trinity" and "Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum."

Michael Linton has said of Messiaen's music that it was able "to shed light on the theological truths of the Catholic faith." The composer himself once exclaimed: "I was born believing. I would not have been able to compose anything if I had not had that grace." "Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant Jésus" ("Twenty Gazes at the Infant Jesus"), a tour de force for a pianist, captures well his multiple gazes on God in the light of the Catholic faith. Written in Paris between March and September 1944, "Vingt Regards" evokes an extraordinary time when the Allies invaded France (D-Day took place that June). Messiaen's score is a profound contemplation on existence and a major outpouring of gratitude. It ends with a movement that encapsulates a 15-minute paean to love. It meditates not only on the love of God and of existence, but on Messiaen's own newfound love for the great pianist for whom he wrote the score, Yvonne Loriod, whom he married after his first wife died.

Few musical events so touched me as the American premiere of Messiaen's tableau opera, "Saint Francis," in San Francisco in 2002. One critic refers to this music as "arguably the most complex, difficult score in all of opera." In one scene an angel plays heavenly music to the saint, who gasps that one more note of this celestial song would force him to sever soul from body. Citing Aquinas, the angel tells Francis: "God dazzles us by an excess of truth. Music carries us to God in default of truth." Messiaen himself once said that music serves for us as a conduit to the ineffable.

The Sound of Eternity

What would a Messiaen piece be like without pealing bells and birdsong? One of his most dramatic uses of birdsong takes place in "Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum." Though André Malraux, the French Minister of Culture who commissioned the piece, requested that Messiaen compose a sort of requiem commemorating the outbreak of the two world wars and France's dead, the composer turned it instead into a profound meditation on the resurrection of Jesus. Messiaen recounted that he reread and meditated on Thomas Aquinas's writings on the resurrection before composing the piece. He uses two bird songs, including that of the Uirapuru, an Amazonian bird traditionally thought to be heard at the moment of death, to symbolize Christ waking the dead from sleep, signaling their impending resurrection. The virtuosic sublime song of the Calandra lark symbolizes, in turn, the gift of a new celestial agility for the risen ones. Appropriately enough, an image of a bird has been etched on Messiaen's tombstone.

Perhaps surprisingly for such a devout Catholic, Messiaen rarely composed songs commemorating the suffering and passion of Christ, but instead emphasized the rapture of divine vision and joy. His was decidedly a theology of glory, transcendence and eternity. Time, suffering and the corporeal—all had their proper role, to be sure, but never set the primary tone of his musical compositions.

On Messiaen's centenary (Dec. 10), concert halls and music festivals will amply celebrate his religious and musical genius. I hope churches also lift up his gift to the 20th century: for almost 60 years, Messiaen served as the principal organist at the church of La Trinité in Paris, and his contribution to the organ repertoire is probably the great-

est since that of Johann Sebastian Bach. If Bach's organ represents a cathedral of sound, Messiaen's is like the stained glass in a cathedral. He once said of his organ playing: "The stained glass windows magnify the light, one of God's first creations, but the organ brings to the church something similar to light that yet surpasses it: the music of the invisible. It is the wondrous overture of the beyond." Some argue that Messiaen's organ music is too unfamiliar, modern or sometimes jarring for ordinary congregants; but too few have really had the opportunity in churches to listen to its exquisite improvisations.

He was catholic with a small "c" too. His 10-part "Turangalila Symphony" was influenced by Hindu melodic songs. After a visit to Japan, Messiaen wrote a tribute to Japanese music in his musical haikus. He also drew on the Indonesian gamelan. If Jesus suggested that his followers consider the birds of the air, Messiaen took this advice to heart and captured the distinct birdsong music of at least 250 different bird species in his various musical works. (Not surprisingly, one of the rapturous parts of the opera "Saint Francis" is the section where Francis communes with the birds).

THE SOCIOLOGIST Robert Wuthnow argues in *Creative Spirituality: The Way of the Artist* that music, for many of our contemporaries, is indeed a privileged conduit toward the ineffable God. Fittingly, this fall several symposia are being held on the spiritual origins of Messiaen's compositions. (One held at Southern Methodist University in September was titled "The Musician as Theologian.") Duquesne School of Music has celebrated an entire year of Messiaen concerts. In our churches, too, Messiaen deserves a fitting tribute (perhaps through his organ music) for the way he helped bridge so many gaps.

As one scholar has said, Messiaen pursued four dramatic tasks in his life: teaching birdsong to urban dwellers, linking color to music (Messiaen had the gift of synesthesia), attuning his music to the rhythms of nature (consider his remarkable musical tribute to Bryce Canyon, "Des Canyons Aux Etoiles...," which led Utah to name a nearby mountain after him, Mount Messiaen) and communicating the mysteries of Christ to nonbelievers. At an appearance in 1986 with his wife, Yvonne Loriod, at the New England Conservatory of Music, Messiaen was asked by a student, "Does a listener have to have had a spiritual experience to appreciate your music?" "Not at all," he replied, "but it would be the highest compliment to me as a composer if you had a spiritual experience because of hearing my music." A

Two musicians discuss the spiritual power of Olivier Messiaen's work, at americamagazine.org/podcast. Plus, samples of Messiaen's music.

Of Clowns And Christian Conscience

The art of Georges Rouault

BY FRANCO MORMANDO

GEORGES ROUAULT was 34 years old and barely recovered from a physical and nervous breakdown when he had a life-changing epiphany in 1905, which he described in a letter to his friend, Édouard Schuré. While out walking one day, the artist happened to come across a "nomad caravan, parked by the roadside." It was a circus, preparing for its next public performance. Rouault's eye fell upon one of the figures: an "old clown sitting in a corner of his caravan in the process of mending his sparkling and gaudy costume." It was then that Rouault had a piercing flash of insight, one that was to affect deeply his vision of life and art.

The artist was utterly struck by the jarring contrast between the clown's external garb and professional accoutrements—"brilliant scintillating objects, made to amuse"—and the wretchedness of his condition as an impoverished, vagabond laborer living on the fringes of society, enduring a "life of infinite sadness, if seen from slightly above." From that contrast came another equally eye-opening realization: "I saw quite clearly that the 'Clown' was me, was us, nearly all of us.... This rich and glittering costume, it is given to us by life itself, we are all more or less clowns, we all wear a glittering costume...." (Rouault summed up

"THE WOUNDED CLOWN (LE CLOWN BLESSÉ II)," BY GEORGES ROUAULT

FRANCO MORMANDO, associate professor of Italian at Boston College, curated the exhibitions "Saints and Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image" at the McMullen Museum at Boston College (1999) and "Hope and Healing: Painting in Italy in a Time of Plague" at the Worcester Art Museum (2005).

this vision in several studies entitled "Sunt Lacrymae Rerum"—"There are tears [of grief] at the very heart of things.")

From that moment on, the clown, as well as other circus figures and denizens of the disreputable periphery of society, haunted Rouault's imagination and art, becoming one of his signature icons. An icon of what? Of the painful disconnection between appearances and reality, between who we are on the inside and who we pretend to be, or what society judges us to be, on the outside. Rouault confronts us on the one hand with clowns and prostitutes, whose real (if battered and buried) human dignity nonetheless still emits some light from within their souls, and on the other hand with the furthest extreme of the social spectrum: the rich, the well-born, the powerful, the "glitterati," wearing the masks of their expensive clothes and polished manners, hiding cruel, narcissistic hearts full of dust and ashes. (See, for example, Rouault's "The Accused" of 1907 and "Superman" of 1916). In his professional life Rouault knew this type well, for it was and is a familiar figure in the upper echelons of the art establishment. His own art dealer, the unsavory but hugely successful Ambroise Vollard, certainly seems to have been of that ilk.

"HEAD OF CHRIST (OR CHRIST MOCKED)," BY GEORGES ROUAULT

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Rouault's death, the McMullen Museum at Boston College has mounted a magnificent, comprehensive review of his prodigiously productive career, **Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958,** on view until Dec. 7. This landmark exhibition features over 180 works from every period of the artist's life, some never before seen in the United States. The exhibition was boldly conceived and curated by Stephen Schloesser, S.J., of the Boston College History Department, who also edited an ample and illuminating catalog that features interdisciplinary contributions from more than 20 scholars.

The key word is "masque," meaning both "theatrical face cover" and "masked pageant" (think of Edgar Allen Poe's "Masque of the Red Death"). Not only in his clown paintings, but everywhere in his art, Rouault explores—and provokes his viewers into exploring—the private human reality behind the public mask in order to expose the soul. In that exposure, the high and mighty are reduced to the level of the risible, if not the pathetic (as in

his 1927 aquatint, "As proud of her noble stature as if she were still alive"), while the lowly are made to shine in their inherent human dignity. Again, as the artist himself explained to Schuré: "I have the defect...of leaving no one his glittering costume, be he king or emperor. I want to see the soul of the man in front of me…and the greater he is, the more mankind glorifies him, the more I fear for his soul." In Schloesser's view, "Rouault felt compelled to unmask society's well-respected and well-born, and to raise up society's lowly and overlooked." In other words, Rouault's art comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. It is an art that a Peter Maurin or a Dorothy Day would assuredly have cherished.

"VERLAINE WITH THE VIRGIN,(VERLAINE À LA VIERGE)." BY GEORGES ROUAULT

With his fertile imagination and years of productivity, Rouault treated many different themes beyond clowns and masks and employed a variety of media and styles. A revelation for me, and, I suspect, for many viewers, is the Rembrandt-inspired style of his earliest period, represented in the exhibition by two stirring canvases, "The Way to Calvary" and "Job." But perhaps his most enduring stylistic trademark is the use of richly luminous colors gleaming forth from a heavy matrix of thick black lines, clearly the influence of his youthful apprenticeship with stained-glass makers. The exhibition includes one actual stained-glass window by Rouault, a crucifixion scene, and it is simply a gem in the literal sense of that word.

Rouault uses the same stained-glass-inspired style to perhaps its most memorable effect in his many depictions of the "Holy Face," the face of the suffering Jesus as traditionally seen in representations of the *sudarium* of St. Veronica, which, according to pious belief, shows the true likeness of Christ. The face of Christ is an almost obsessive visual leitmotif for Rouault, a potent symbol of the suffering of an innocent humanity oppressed by an unjust society.

Another disturbing existential question is raised by Rouault's art, most literally in the title he gives to several of his works: "Are we not all slaves?" Here Rouault is speaking from bitter personal experience. In 1917, desperately poor and with a family to support, he was forced into what was essentially indentured servitude to that same infamous art dealer, Ambroise Vollard, or Fifi Voleur (Fifi the Thief) as Gauguin called him, a cunning businessman whose ambiguous personal life had much to hide, as Christopher Benfey has probingly written for the online magazine Slate.

Those who prefer art that presents only what Charles Baudelaire would call "la vie en beau" (the pretty side of life) or who shun the examination of conscience might not fully savor this exhibition, but Rouault's style is so visually compelling that it will certainly arrest anyone's attention and ultimately give delight on some level. For many viewers, I dare say, questions surrounding the moral life, social justice, sincerity and authenticity will likely dominate their response to this exhibition, as they dominated Rouault's artistic imagination and as they dominate the conception of the exhibition itself.

Rouault is probably familiar to anyone who went through the parochial school system in the United States. My own introduction to "Rouault the Catholic artist" occurred many years ago at Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx. Yet Rouault himself (a true believer, albeit not of the orthodox kind) rejected the very notion of sacred art or the "Catholic artist." "There is no sacred art," he has been quoted as having said. "There is just art pure and simple." Nonetheless, Rouault's work not only has the power to please the eye and feed the mind, but to quicken our attention to the moral and spiritual dimension of human experience and to help move us to a higher plane of consciousness. A

View a video and slideshow of Georges Rouault's art, at americamagazine.org/connects.

Page 18: "The Wounded Clown (Le Clown Blessé II)," by Georges Rouault, 1939. Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, N.H. ©2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

Page 19: "Head of Christ (or Christ Mocked) (Christ aux Outrages)," by Georges Rouault, 1905. Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Va., ©2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

Page 20: "Verlaine With the Virgin (Verlaine à la Vierge)," by Georges Rouault, c. 1939. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., ©2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

Book Reviews

Fighting the Lord's Fight

Vatican Secret Diplomacy

Joseph P. Hurley and Pope Pius XII

By Charles R. Gallagher, S.J.
Yale Univ. Press. 304p $40
ISBN 9780300121346

Among the movers and shakers of American Catholicism, Joseph P. Hurley (1894-1967) surely deserves a high place. As priest, bishop, Vatican envoy and ally of Franklin D. Roosevelt, he was at the center of a number of 20th-century debates involving the church. As influential in his day as his contemporary, Francis Cardinal Spellman, Hurley remains far less known. Fortunately, with the publication of Charles Gallagher's new work, *Vatican Secret Diplomacy*, this forgotten prelate finally receives the attention he deserves.

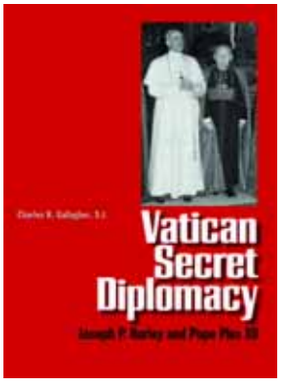
Gallagher, a Jesuit seminarian, is the author of a previous work on the Archdiocese of St. Augustine, Fla., which Hurley led from 1940 to 1967. Granted access to Hurley's private papers, he has produced a fascinating study.

As Gallagher tells it, Hurley was a classic pre-conciliar Catholic. He believed, as did many U.S. bishops, that a "blessed harmony" existed between the church and the United States, and thought patriotism "should have the strongest place in man's affections."

Once ordained, a combative spirit animated him: "Dominating concepts of Catholic militarism, Americanism, patriotism, and athleticism would all be transferred to his religious outlook and his later diplomatic career…. To compromise, dither, walk away from a fight, or 'not face up to facts' placed one in the detestable category of 'the Catholic milksop'."

Fighting the Good Lord's fight—as he saw it—was Hurley's specialty. A man of the world as well as the cloth, his abilities were recognized by his superiors, who assigned him posts in India, Japan and, finally, the Vatican. That Hurley took well to all these positions—despite any formal diplomatic training—speaks to his natural talents.

Gallagher's book is as much character study as religious biography. Hurley was a man of contradictions. Though outstanding in many respects, he sometimes allowed prejudice to overtake him. While serving in the papal secretariat of state (1934-40), he sympathized with the controversial priest Charles Coughlin. When he finally took a stand against "Charlie," as he called him, it was only because of Coughlin's criticism of Franklin D. Roosevelt, not his anti-Semitism. And yet, to Hurley's credit, after he witnessed what was actually happening to Jews during the 1930s and 40s, he became their champion—delivering scorching sermons against Hitler and his "criminal effort to eradicate the Jews." He also aligned himself with the White House, becoming "the most outspoken critic of American Catholic noninterventionism and arguably the most ardent Catholic supporter of Roosevelt's wartime foreign policy." At a time of rampant isolationism, this was daring.



Even after America's entry into the war, conflicts continued, especially when the United States and the Holy See differed. Invariably, Hurley took his government's side, even promoting the State Department's "Black Propaganda" against the papacy (meant to influence its political stands). Had the Vatican become aware of this, it could have ended Hurley's ecclesiastical career.

Though positive toward Hurley, Gallagher offers a one-sided view of Eugenio Pacelli (Pope Pius XII). Relying upon questionable evidence, Gallagher depicts Pacelli as overly cautious; more fearful of Communism than of Nazism; and not as outspoken as his predecessor, Pius XI. These are familiar but unpersuasive charges, given that Hitler's most fervent supporters always blamed Pacelli for the anti-Nazi line taken by the Holy See. Gallagher errs when he writes that Cardinal Pacelli's 1937 warning to the American diplomat Alfred Klieforth was "arguably the only time Pacelli personally expressed his disdain for Hitler." In fact, as early as 1923, Pacelli, then papal nuncio in Germany, wrote to the Vatican (following Hitler's failed putsch) and denounced the future dictator by name.

One of Gallagher's sources against Pius XII is Hurley himself, who revered Pius XI but doubted Pacelli. But the claim that there was a big difference between Pius XI and Pius XII is unconvincing, since Pius XI appointed Cardinal Pacelli his secretary of state and said the cardinal "speaks with my voice."

Some of Hurley's criticisms may have been based on simple ignorance. Gallagher cites an entry in one of Hurley's papers, for example, where Hurley praises Pius XI's anti-Nazi encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*: "Ratti [Pius XI] said it in March 1937, even if Pacelli missed the point later." Apparently, Hurley was unaware that Pacelli drafted Pius XI's encyclical. Similarly, Hurley believed Pius XII's wartime statements were not direct enough; but the Nazis themselves denounced Pius as a "mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals," and many rescuers have testified that Pius inspired them.

In 1940, Pius XII suddenly appointed Hurley (still stationed in Rome) to be bishop of St. Augustine, a move that had the effect of placing the outspoken prelate in a "backwater" diocese. Gallagher sees this as Pius's punishment for Hurley's independent ways. But whatever tensions existed, the pope must have admired the feisty American on some level; for when the war ended, he surprised Hurley by reviving his diplomatic career, appointing him acting chief of the apostolic nunciature in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. There he courageously battled the Communists, even as he met with constant frustration.

The Reviewers

William Doino Jr. is a Catholic researcher and writer who specializes in the history of the Holocaust.

Peter Heinegg is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.

Gerald T. Cobb, S.J., is associate professor in the English Department at Seattle University.

Hurley experienced far more success in St. Augustine, to which he returned in 1950, expanding the diocese through savvy real estate deals and religious gusto. If only Hurley's knack for property development had been matched by a more prophetic imagination. A staunch traditionalist, he opposed the Second Vatican Council and even ridiculed John Courtney Murray, S.J., as a "master of double-talk."

Last, though an outspoken foe of racism abroad, Hurley was less sensitive to it back home. During 1964, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. transformed St. Augustine into "a major area of civil rights activity and media attention." Hurley wanted no part of this. Declining to meet with King, he instead sent him an equivocal letter expressing Christian fraternity "among people of different races," but warning against "any act which might occasion…ill will." This was six years after the American bishops had issued—on the orders of a dying Pius XII—a pastoral condemning the sins of racial segregation.

One wonders how anyone, observing Hurley's failure, might have mistaken him for a "Catholic milksop."

William Doino Jr.

Singed, Smashed, Shredded…

A Universal History of the Destruction of Books

From Ancient Sumer to Modern-day Iraq

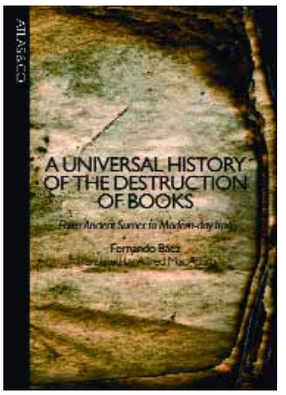
By Fernando Báez
Trans. by Alfred MacAdam
Atlas & Co. 272p $25
IBSN 9781934633014

Samuel Noah Kramer told us that history begins at Sumer, and so does the inveterate attempt to expunge it. Pulverized and broken tablets from the city of Uruk (biblical Erech), dating from 4100 to 3300 B.C., bear witness to the beginning of a 7,000-year-long pattern whose most horrible recent manifestation was the wanton devastation in 2003 of Baghdad's Archaeological Museum and National Library—only 150 miles north of Uruk—under the absent-minded aegis of Operation Shock and Awe. The toll exacted by arsonists and looters: 1 million books, 10 million documents, 14,000 artifacts.

Fernando Báez, a Venezuelan writer whose previous books include *The Cultural Destruction of Iraq*, sounds like a disciple and imitator of Robert Burton, Jorge Luís Borges and Umberto Eco: a skeptical, omnivorous, funky, depressed (with good reason) bibliophile. Not content with cataloging the myriad assaults against books, incunabula, manuscripts and records of every sort in every age by every brand of fanatic, Báez also lists and laments the ravages caused by accidental fires, floods, wars, insects, material decomposition (e.g., in papyrus and wood pulp paper) and human indifference.

It is an astonishing story. Most readers will have heard of the burning of the Library of Alexandria (often carelessly

attributed to Omar I [585-644], but almost certainly the result of various depredations over the centuries by Roman troops, earthquakes and plain old neglect). But Alexandria was only one site among the hundreds that Báez describes or at least enumerates where great collections of books came to ignominious grief: Ebla, Persepolis, much of China in 213 B.C., Ephesus (where books of magic were incinerated at the urging of St. Paul), Byzantium (the Iconoclasts), the Swiss monastery of St. Gall in 926 (Huns), Cairo in 1068 (Turks), Damascus in 1108 (Crusaders), Baghdad in 1258 (Genghis Khan) and on and on. Medieval clerics lit bonfires of Talmuds; conquistadors and monks destroyed Aztec antiquities; Catholics and Puritans burned each other's books. Revolutionaries, counter-revolutionaries, moral extremists (Savonarola, Anthony Comstock), fascists, Nazis, communists, Russians, Germans, Spaniards, Serbs, you name it (and Báez does, over and over).



One might think that the end of this particular historical nightmare is now in sight, thanks to the ease of mechanical reproduction and the digitizing of information. Surely even the most fiendish tyrant could never succeed in eradicating the Book of Isaiah, the plays of Shakespeare, the scores of Mozart's operas or Joyce's *Ulysses*; there are simply too many copies out there. Báez acknowledges this, after a fashion, when he notes that all of surviving ancient Greek literature can now be inscribed on a single CD; but then, perhaps reluctant to abandon the scenes of conflagration and cultural loss that have fueled his outrage, he adds that CDs are easily scratched and discarded.

Perhaps the most crucial issue Báez raises is the psychology of "biblioclasty." Obviously, the book-burner is aiming to silence or erase an idea, a school of thought, perhaps an entire culture; but there is more to it than that. (Some of the most ferocious fans of book-burning—Emperor Qin Shi Huang, Cardinal Cisneros, Adolf Hitler—were also avid book collectors.) Báez largely ignores the problem of greater or lesser artistic, intellectual and ethical value; but to judge from the deluge of mediocre (or worse) books, films, programs, ads, speeches and so on pouring out into the contemporary marketplace, can't we assume that most cultural products of literate societies have always been of—shall we say—limited worth? So perhaps we need not weep too profusely for what has been lost forever. And what about the downright harmful, vicious or worthless books?

The inevitable liberal response here must be that, good, bad or indifferent, we ought to be guided by the Library of Congress's ideal of preserving—somewhere or other—copies of absolutely everything that gets published. Even wretched stuff is worth knowing about, because it helps to complete our picture of the age that made and consumed it. And then there are the usual John Stuart Mill arguments about the uncertainty of our judgment and the danger of suppressing unpopular opinions. Báez does not come to grips with such questions, but his book serves as a perfect launching pad for them.

Báez's approach is spirited and journalistic—there are no footnotes or index. On the other hand, he traveled to Iraq and reports movingly about the catastrophes he saw there. His data are generally quite reliable (he claims to have spent 12 years writing the book), though he does betray a weakness for overstatement, flatly declaring, for example, that Dubrovnik was destroyed in 1991 or that Iraq was struck by genocide in 2007. And his grim dossier is important, because of the way it illustrates the endlessly quoted but still indispensable epigraph from Heinrich Heine's *Almansor* (1821): "Where they have burned books, they will end by burning human beings."

There is a lot to be said against human beings (including their habit of writing dreadful books), but letting all of them have their say without violent interruption seems, on the whole, to be the best way of getting at the truth. The United States may not have been plagued by the Khmer Rouge or the Taliban, but we have had and have our share of book-banners and book-burners tackling a whole range of noxious items from *Huckleberry Finn* to *Harry Potter*; so it is good to have Báez's passionate, pessimistic plea for tolerance. John Milton could be an insufferable, humorless, sexist crank, but his words from *Areopagitica* (1644) still haunt us: "As good almost kill a man as kill a good book: Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye."

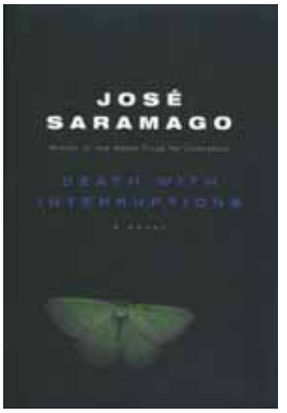
Peter Heinegg

Life Eternal?

Death With Interruptions

A Novel

By José Saramago
trans. by Margaret Jull Costa
Harcourt. 256p $24
ISBN 9780151012741



The Portugese writer José Saramago received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1998, in part for novelistic fables that powerfully critique social institutions and human failings. Now 86 years old, Saramago has based his latest novel, *Death With Interruptions*, on the extraordinary premise that the people of a small, unnamed country suddenly stop dying. Thousands of people, ranging from poor citizens to the country's Queen Mother, linger in seemingly permanent stasis at the threshold of death.

While initially appearing to be a blessing, the moratorium on death soon presents very serious problems indeed. Families strain to care for infirm relatives who cannot die; insurance companies falter as people cancel obsolete life insurance policies; and the undertakers' union seeks a government bailout in the form of regulations requiring the buri-

al or cremation of all domestic animals. Realizing that critical patients will never leave his hospital, an administrator observes with unintended irony, "The situation is extremely grave."

Larger political, moral and religious reverberations move through the country. The Catholic cardinal phones the prime minister in great consternation to say "without death there is no resurrection, and without resurrection there is no church." Economists warn that the burden of caring for the near-dead will fall upon an ever-shrinking fraction of society. A philosopher predicts impending moral chaos, because "if human beings do not die then everything will be permissible."

Throughout this parable Saramago presents death in three successive guises. Initially death is an unseen force; then it appears as the familiar skeletal figure but holding the position of a bored bureaucrat: "She lives in a chilly room accompanied by a rusty old scythe that never replies to questions, and is surrounded only by cobwebs and a few dozen filing cabinets with large drawers stuffed with index cards." In the novel's final section Saramago portrays death as an attractive woman in her mid-30's who becomes entranced with a cellist, a Prufrockian fellow who was supposed to die at age 49 but somehow has slipped into his 50th year. Death determinedly tracks the cellist down, only to become entranced with him.

The successive stages in Saramago's portrayal of death come across as arbitrary and disjointed. Is death just another functionary asleep at the job, or is she becoming human in some unexpected, secularly redemptive transformation? The ideal Saramago reader is someone who enjoys settling in for long, philosophical musing about these questions and about the way an extended thought experiment casts light upon our contemporary situation and human nature. But by forgoing many of the conventions of character, plot and style, Saramago produces a work that is at times confusing and clunky. For example, he eschews all quotation marks to distinguish speakers within his text, and refuses to name any of his characters. The effect at times is dizzying. Without conventional narrative anchors, the novel at times seems to come unmoored.

Saramago employs an unnamed narrator, who is both omniscient and fallible, frequently admitting that he forgot to mention a crucial fact, or that he offered a bad description that must now be rephrased. While the narrator presents his own flaws as charming foibles, he offers an unstinting critique of virtually everyone else mentioned in the novel.

Read as a stylistic romp, this novel certainly is diverting, but ultimately it disappoints because of its excess of cynicism. Saramago's narrator freely admits to "the congenital unreality of this fable," but it is not so much the unreality that rankles as it is the replacement of serious literary/philosophical perspective with mere peevishness. Saramago uses too broad a brush to paint society's problems, and his version of the church is particularly narrow and prejudicial. The Catholic Apostolic Church of Rome is known by the ominous-sounding acronym Cacor, and it receives the kind of treatment reserved for ogres and evil giants in fairy tales. The cardinal makes implausibly sinister generalizations such as "our speciality...has always been the neutralization of the overly curious mind through faith."

Ordinarily the reward for a reader of innovative fiction is the ability to view the world in a kind of funhouse mirror, but this novel portrays an ultimately grim house of horrors. It is hard to imagine the reader who can attain sufficient detachment to enjoy speculative fiction about death, since death comes into our lives as anything but speculative or allegorical.

At the end of the novel Saramago offers what might be called the consolation of the cyclical, a tried-and-true device in experimental fiction whereby the novel's conclusion leads the reader back to the novel's beginning. This narrative tail-chasing is clever at one level, but to anyone coming from a Christian tradition of contemplating death, it will be disappointingly clear that recursion is not resurrection and that, at least in this novel, cynicism is a dead end.

Gerald T. Cobb

What Willy Loman and TV's "Mad Men" have in common, at americamagazine.org/connects.

Classifieds

Authors

ANNE RICE on YouTube at www.youtube.com/AnneRiceDotCom and www.youtube.com/AnneRiceSite. E-mail: anneobrienrice@mac.com; www.annerice.com.

Education

OBLATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY offers an M.A. degree in spirituality. Regular semester and intersession courses. Visit www.ost.edu.

Parish Missions

INSPIRING, DYNAMIC PREACHING: parish missions, retreats, days of recollection. www.sabbathretreats.org.

Pilgrimage

SPANISH MYSTICAL ROAD: 14-day Ignatian pilgrimage including Fatima, May 13-27, 2009. Experience your Catholic faith and spirituality first hand: Montserrat, Javier, Loyola, Madrid, Avila, Toledo, Seville, Lisbon, Fatima and more Visit http://mysite.verizon.net/mwcooper. Contact: Michael Cooper, S.J., at paraletravel@verizon.net or (727) 644-5544.

Positions

CHURCH HISTORY PROFESSOR, full time. Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary is a free-standing seminary with college, pre-theology and theology programs. We are currently seeking to hire a full-time church history instructor who has earned at least a licentiate from a pontifical university. For an application, interested parties should submit their C.V. to: Rev. David Diamond, Vice Rector, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, 100 East Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, PA 19096; e-mail: vicerectorscs@adphila.org.

DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS MINISTRY sought by Seattle University. Reporting to the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, the Director plays an integral role in fostering the spiritual, liturgical and religious life of students. For a full job description, benefits information, and to apply, please visit the Seattle University jobs Web site at https://jobs.seattleu.edu. Persons who require assistance with the recruitment process may contact the Office of Human Resources at (206) 296-5870. Seattle University is an equal opportunity employer.

DIRECTOR OF EVANGELIZATION / PASTORAL ASSOCIATE. St. Clement Parish, located in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago, seeks a Director of Evangelization/Pastoral Associate to work as a full-time pastoral minister involved in a variety of creative ministries in our dynamic faith community. Particular responsibilities include Adult Sacramental Preparation, Adult Faith Formation and Young Adult Ministry. The Director of Evangelization/Pastoral Associate shares in the pastoral outreach to the sick, bereaved and alienated.

Requirements include a master's degree in theology, excellent people skills, experience in supervising, teaching and organizing, and the ability to work with a variety of people, liturgical styles and pastoral initiatives. The position is open immediately. A more detailed description is available. Cover letter and résumé should be sent to the pastor, Rev. Ken Simpson: kcsimpson @stclementchurch.org

LITURGY COORDINATOR / SACRISTAN, St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church. Good liturgy takes hard work; great liturgy takes dedicated ministers with a vision for excellence. Large Vatican II parish with five weekend Masses looking for an energetic, engaging person to coordinate liturgical celebrations with style and reverence. Train and schedule ministers; plan weddings, funerals, sacramental rituals; responsible for all liturgical articles and vestments. Full time with weekends; competitive salary and benefits. Cover letter and résumé to: L.C. Search, St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church, 1897 W. Main Street, Lewisville, TX 75067; e-mail: office@stphilip cc.org; fax: (972) 219-5429. No phone calls. View job description at www.st philipcc.org/job_board.htm.

MORAL THEOLOGY PROFESSOR. Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary is a free-standing seminary with college, pre-theology and theology programs. We are currently seeking to hire a full-

time moral theology professor who has a terminal degree in the discipline of moral theology. The following qualifications are offered to guide you in your decision to apply for the position: 1) Be a practicing Catholic, who engages in the intellectual enterprise with firm fidelity to Catholic teaching; 2) Have professional academic training in Catholic theology with an earned doctorate in moral theology. Applications will be accepted until Feb. 1, 2009. All qualified persons applying to begin teaching in the 2009-10 school year should send their C.V. to: Rev. David Diamond, Vice Rector, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, 100 East Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, PA 19096; e-mail: vicerectorscs@adphila.org.

Religious Art

CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS ART in an iconic tradition available. Go to http://www.contemporaryreligiousart.com for a gallery visit of original works.

Retreats

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

Services

COUNSELING: licensed, certified therapist with 30 years experience in family, couples and individual therapy. Secular Carmelite with M.A. in theology, particular interest in the problem of suffering. Near Annapolis, Md. Jane Lytle-Vieira, Ph: (410) 987-0775.

Wills

Please remember **America** in your will. Our legal title is: America Press Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.

AMERICA CLASSIFIED. Classified advertisements are accepted for publication in either the print version of ***America*** *or on our Web site, www.americamagazine.org. Ten-word minimum. Rates are per word per issue. 1-5 times: $1.50; 6-11 times: $1.28; 12-23 times: $1.23; 24-41 times: $1.17. For an additional $30, your print ad will be posted on* ***America****'s Web site for one week. The flat rate for a Web-only classified ad is $150 for 30 days. Ads may be submitted by e-mail to: ads@americamagazine.org; by fax to (928) 222-2107; by postal mail to: Classified Department,* ***America****, 106 West 56th St., New York, NY 10019. To post a classified ad online, go to our home page and click on "Advertising" at the top of the page. We do not accept ad copy over the phone. MasterCard and Visa accepted. For more information call: (212) 515-0102.*

Opportunity Missed

As a religion teacher and a head coach at a Jesuit high school (and an amateur athlete myself), I was excited to receive the Oct. 20 issue with the cover photo and headline "The Soul of Sports." Unfortunately, I was disappointed by what I found inside.

None of the articles addressed the essential issue alluded to on your cover. What is the proper role of athletics in Catholic schools, especially Catholic universities? The lack of discussion was made all the more pronounced by your cover photo, featuring two African-American basketball players. On so many Jesuit campuses, minority students are woefully underrepresented, except in our athletic departments. The tremendous amount of money that Catholic universities accrue as a result of these "amateur" student athletes raises weighty issues about race, class and privilege.

The Oct. 20 issue also failed to explore the impact that sports figures have on our culture. The young people I teach and coach are astonishingly aware of the exploits and accomplishments of athletes at the professional and collegiate levels. We live in a culture where athletes are heroes.

Finally, Patrick Kelly, S.J., spends much of his article "Sports and the Spiritual Life" discussing the idea of "flow." But there was very little about the educational and spiritual formation that can be brought about by physical fitness and competition. The fundamental question we must ask ourselves is this: How will we measure success? At the end of the season, were my boys more loving than when we began? Were they more generous? Did they grow in compassion for others? Or did they simply run faster and win more than in past seasons?

What can we do to help student athletes develop their physical and spiritual abilities? Working with them to make and deliver sandwiches for the hungry, having senior captains offer the Gospel reflection at a team liturgy, praying with our rivals before a race—all of these moments are profound opportunities for our students to see that the spiritual life is not lived simply on retreat, during Sunday Mass or in their one hour of religion class each day. When they can bring their faith to all aspects of their lives, their religious imagination and our entire faith community are enriched.

Chad Evans
San Francisco, Calif.

Study War No More

I appreciated the recent articles concerning war and military chaplaincy ("Showing God's Face on the Battlefield," by John J. McLain, S.J., "The Chaplain's Dilemma," by Tom Cornell, and "One War at a Time," by Gregory D. Foster, 11/17), but I was concerned by Father McLain's argument in favor of military

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 11 combined issues: Jan. 7-14, 21-28, March 31-April 7, May 26-June 2, June 9-16, 23-30, July 7-14, 21-28, Aug. 4-11, 18-25, Dec. 22-29) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodicals postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope; Circulation: Judith Palmer, (212) 581-4640. Subscriptions: United States, $48 per year; add U.S. $22 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. $32 per year for overseas surface postage. For overseas airmail delivery, please call for rates. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, 106 West 56th St. New York, NY 10019. Printed in the U.S.A.

chaplaincy. He notes that Christ is present on the battlefield, but he fails to mention that where he is most vividly present is in the dying people who are directly affected by the destruction of war.

I agree that it is essential to "minister to those who need God." Such ministerial duties involve evangelization—speaking messages like "don't kill" and "love your enemies" while denouncing messages like "kill other people" and "destroy your enemies," both favorites of the military.

The church might well consider many women opting to have an abortion as candidates for those "most in need of God," yet I wonder how many chaplains are sent to minister in abortion clinics, where Christ also can be found?

Dan Cosacchi
Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Caesar and God

Re Tom Cornell's article on military chaplaincy ("The Chaplain's Dilemma," 11/17): By about 30 A.D., the Roman army had conquered much of the then-known world. They weren't nice guys, and their methods of subjugation would make Abu Ghraib look like a Boy Scout camp. Nevertheless, when a Roman centurion reached out on behalf of his dying slave, Jesus acted and saved the slave. The Gospel of Luke reports that Jesus was amazed at that centurion's faith. The Lord judged the individual soldier, not the whole army.

Similarly, Catholic chaplains are needed to help individual service members who are struggling to serve both Caesar and God.

Michael E. Kennedy
Groton, Conn.

A Writer's Life

Thank you for a beautiful tribute to Jon Hassler ("The Last Catholic Novelist," 11/3). Having lived and worked on the Saint John's University campus in Collegeville, Minn. for 30 years, I felt honored to know Jon as a friend. We often talked about his forthcoming novels. When asked how he chose names for his characters, he told me he walked through cemeteries and read names on tombstones. I once asked him how he got his plot ideas and, with a quiet chuckle, Jon said, "I sit in greasy spoon restaurants and eavesdrop on the conversation of the folks in the next booth." I believe that is what made Jon's characters so real.

I will always remember Jon as a soft-spoken, humble and beautiful individual. It was sad to watch his health deteriorate so fast as he spoke of the many novels he yet had to write, stories that we will never get to read.

Dolores Schuh, C.H.M.
Davenport, Iowa

Author, Author

As I read the wonderful article on Jon Hassler ("The Last Catholic Novelist," 11/3), I kept thinking that one truly Catholic writer is not mentioned, one whose sacramental imagery surprises and delights and even awes the reader, and that is the author of the piece, the Rev. Andrew M. Greeley. Bravo and many thanks to Father Greeley for the writings he has given us, where grace is to be found and celebrated and lavishly, freely given.

Gene Szarek, C.R.
Chicago, Ill.

Early Evidence

I think Tom Cornell raises some good points in "The Chaplain's Dilemma" (11/17). Chaplains should be more supportive of believers who experience a crystallization of their conscience while serving in the military. As a conscientious objector myself, I am very thankful for the support I received from my base chaplain many years ago. His understanding of my decision and the reasons for it served to confirm the underlying principles of my convictions.

The fundamental problem with chaplaincy, however, is the witness it gives to the world; it gives the impression that military service is objectively compatible with Christian faith. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it is, of course; but I question whether that teaching can be reconciled with the church's earliest teachings on war. All the earliest evidence points to an ultimate reverence for the image of God in humanity and a total prohibition of bloodshed. St. Paul criticized the Corinthians for suing one another in court; what would he say about Christians killing each other in defense of their nation-states?

Jonathan D. Lace
Montclair, N.J.

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

The Word

The Expectant Months

First Sunday of Advent (B), Nov. 30, 2008

Readings: Is 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37

"We are the clay and you the potter" (Is 64:7)

ART BY TAD DUNNE

"BE WATCHFUL! Be alert! Don't be caught unaware!" Jesus warns his disciples in this Sunday's Gospel. We begin another Advent season of watching and waiting. For some it is a time of delight, waiting eagerly for Christmas, for anticipated gifts, for time off from work and school, for happy gatherings of family and friends. For others it is a dreaded time, as they approach their first holiday without a loved one or worry about how they will pay for the gifts and meals they want to provide. Whatever our situation, the Scripture readings today help us to adopt a stance of faithful watching and waiting.

Advent is not a time of waiting for the coming of the Christ child—that already happened more than 2,000 years ago. It is, rather, a time when we break our normal routine and move into heightened alert to perceive more intensely the ways of Emmanuel, "God with us." The watchfulness about which Jesus speaks in today's Gospel is not waiting in dread, nor is the object of our vigilance unknown. Rather, it is attentive listening for the familiar footstep of the returning Beloved. We would not want to be found sleeping, but ready with open arms.

Most of us find waiting very difficult. We try to eliminate it as much as possible with fast food, express lines and ever speedier Internet connections. Waiting for the end of a prolonged illness, or at the unemployment office, is another kind of torturous waiting. Waiting for the return of a long-expected loved one can seem impossibly long. It is this last kind of waiting of which today's Gospel speaks: constant vigilance for the return of the Beloved who has entrusted everything to our care in the interim.

The time of waiting and watching is not idle biding of time or maintaining the status quo. Like parents anticipating the birth of a child, we have much work to do during the expectant months. In today's Gospel Jesus talks about each one having his or her own work to do and having been given the power to accomplish it. Paul, too, encourages the Corinthians and us by reminding us that we lack no spiritual gift as we wait for the revelation of Christ.

We may wonder how we will recognize the Coming One. In the first reading today the exiles want God to manifest divine power in a way that will be absolutely unmistakable. They pray that God would "rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before" him. They want God to show divine power in "awesome deeds," such as "no ear has ever heard, no eye has ever seen." Such a revelation would compel belief and good behavior. But in Advent we call to mind again that divine power is revealed not in pyrotechnic displays of fire and quaking mountains, but in the immense love that comes in the form of a vulnerable child. God has ruptured the dividing line between divinity and humanity by taking on human flesh in Christ. Advent asks us, likewise, to both embody Christ and to watch for his presence in each one we meet, particularly those who are most needy.

In our watching and waiting, we can become discouraged by how unlike Christ we have been. We can feel like the returned exiles in the first reading from Isaiah, who lament, "all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rages; we have all withered like leaves and our guilt carries us away like the wind." Although they had experienced God's redeeming acts in bringing them safely out of Babylon, they now find daunting the work of reconstructing the Temple and their lives in Jerusalem. Their land is despoiled, their economic resources are puny, and their own sinfulness looms large. Unable by their own means to reshape the inner and outer muck of their lives, they give themselves over to the Divine Potter saying, "we are the clay and you the potter; we are all the work of your hands." This is the One who remolds them into a faithful and hope-filled people.

In the end it is not we but God who is faithful and watchful, as Paul tells the Corinthians. It is God who shepherds us with gentle strength, God who tenderly cares for us like a vinedresser his vineyard, as the responsorial psalm assures us. No matter what our circumstances, the Divine Potter can mold us into watchful and hopeful disciples, empty bowls, open and waiting.

The beginning of a new liturgical year is a season to hollow out space in the busiest of days to rejoice in the extraordinary gift that has already been given us in Emmanuel, God with us. It is a time to let ourselves be remolded. It is a season to wait in hopeful anticipation for what this new piece of art will become.

Barbara E. Reid

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., is a Dominican Sister of Grand Rapids, Mich., and professor of New Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill.

Praying With Scripture

- What image of God in today's readings most appeals to you: potter, shepherd, redeemer, vinedresser, father or returning lord?
- What does God want to reshape in your life this Advent?
- What gifts has God given you to be shared in this time of watching and waiting?