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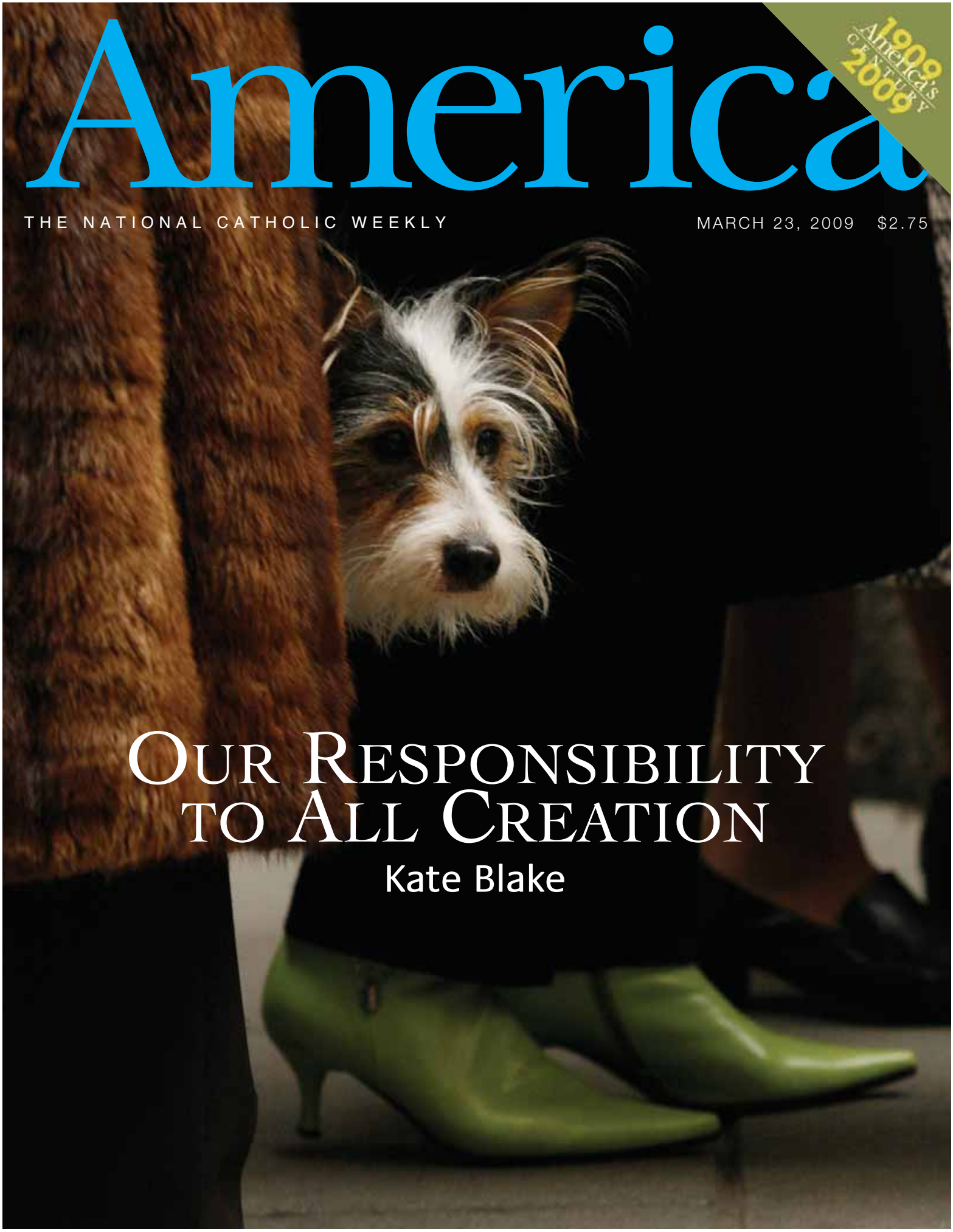

Our Responsibility to All Creation

Kate Blake

OF MANY THINGS

Word of mouth makes for the best advertising. How often have you learned of the most enjoyable books or movies from the reports of friends? They are all the more enjoyable for being pleasures shared among friends rather than highly promoted, mass-market commodities. So it was recently for me.

Barb and Lou Kuttner are two of the best-read people I know. Their ranch house in Arizona's Sonoran desert is brimming with books. Years ago when I took vacation time with the Kuttner family on North Carolina's Outer Banks, they took as much time planning the books they would bring and share as in packing for the trip.

A few weeks ago I took my annual retreat at a *casita* on the Kuttners' "ranchette" in the mesquite landscape of the San Pedro drainage in southern Arizona. The evening before I began the retreat, both Barb and Lou recommended I read *Three Cups of Tea*, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.

It was not the first time I had heard praise for the book, but I confess I had been turned off by its marketing as "chick lit." If *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time* (Penguin) is chick lit, then I have to reconsider my views of the category. For this book is a rip-roaring adventure story of 21st-century humanitarianism.

Greg Mortenson, a trauma nurse and a mountaineer, stumbled on the village of Korphe in Pakistan's Karakoram Range after a failed attempt to climb the notorious K-2. Twice on his descent he fell behind his porter, lost the trail and wandered into Korphe. While recuperating there, he discovered the villagers had set aside land for a school, but the government of Pakistan never made good on its promises to build it, so the children did their lessons drawing in the sand. Mortenson, won over by the villagers' hospitality, promised to return the next year to build a school.

Mortenson attempted to scrape together the $12,000 he needed to build the school by writing more than five hundred individual letters to potential celebrity donors, but he received little help. He lived ascetically, crashing in a student apartment, storing his possessions in a rental locker, setting aside his savings for the project and selling his mountaineering equipment to meet his goal. Even when, at the last moment, he found financial backing, married and became a father, Mortenson lived on a shoestring. He practiced a kind of apostolic asceticism. He lived poorly for the sake of his mission—building schools, especially for girls, in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The religious dimension of his story is understated. His parents ran Lutheran mission schools in East Africa, where he spent his boyhood. When Mother Teresa died, he happened to be in Calcutta, and we learn that the saint of Calcutta was his "hero"; he talked his way into her convent to pray alongside her body. Otherwise, his spirituality is an austere humanitarianism, not so foreign to the children of other American Protestant missioners.

The book is replete with stories of Mortenson's kidnapping in Waziristan, of fatwas against him and his schools, of warlords who are won over and others who meet him deep in the desert to seek his help and of progressive Muslims who volunteer to be his fixers. Everywhere he is known for his good work and fidelity to his word.

Eight years into a deteriorating war in Afghanistan, it is good to know that Gen. David Petraeus has sought his advice. Only last week there was a report that militants in Pakistan's Swat Valley had destroyed 200 schools for girls.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

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Cover: A dog waits to be blessed on the day of San Anton, Spain's patron saint of animals, in Madrid. Reuters/Susana Vera

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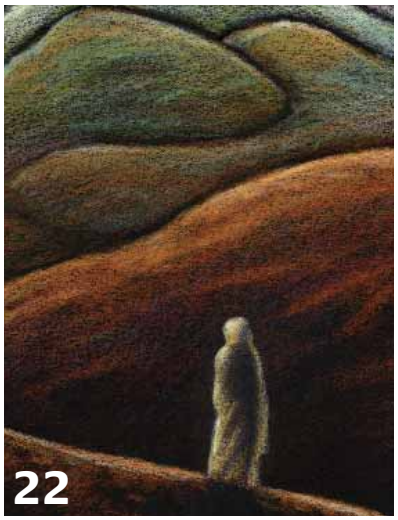

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COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

BOOKS & CULTURE

ON THE WEB

Michael Paul Gallagher, S.J., (right) author of *The Human Poetry of Faith*, talks on our podcast about how to nourish the religious imagination. Plus, Rob Weinert-Kendt reviews two religiously themed plays, and from the archives, the editors on the death of Gandhi. All at americamagazine.org

Power in the Present, Hope for the Future

The late Halford Luccock, who began teaching at Yale Divinity School a year before the Great Crash of 1929, recounts in his book, *Unfinished Business*, a story told by a dinner guest about the fate of Flagstaff, Maine. When residents learned that their small town was to be flooded as part of a dam project, they stopped all improvements and repairs to their property. Soon the town fell into ruin. As the dinner companion observed, "What was the use of painting a house if it was to be covered with water in six months? Why repair anything when the whole village was to be wiped out?" Then he added: "Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present."

I heard that same logic during an exchange on a recent episode of "The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer" on PBS. Economy experts had just described the current financial crisis as a crisis of trust. "Yes," agreed the New York Times columnist David Brooks: "People don't have trust in the future. And if you don't have trust in the future, why should you invest? Why should you spend?"

Surely the daily reports of criminal behavior, corruption and malfeasance by money lenders, investment firms, government regulators and many others have created a crisis of trust in our institutions. Yet as Brooks insightfully noted, the lack of trust now has spilled over into our vision of the future, and it is paralyzing our present.

A Spiritual Challenge

Hope in the future is deeply rooted in our national psyche. It is part of the soul of our nation. Pope Benedict XVI said as much last year when he spoke at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C.: "Americans have always been a people of hope: Your ancestors came to this country with the expectation of finding new freedom and opportunity...of being able to start completely anew, building a new nation on new foundations…. Hope for the future is very much a part of the American character." Clearly the challenge before us is not simply economic or psychological, but spiritual.

This is a moment to recall who we are. We are a people unafraid to welcome "your tired, your poor, your huddled masses," because we measure others by the quality of their hopes for the future, not by the circumstances of their birth. We are a people who have learned repeatedly throughout our history that economic distress can help us to appreciate that there are other ways to be rich that are not financial or even material. We are a people who have successfully undertaken enormous tasks that would have daunted others.

Here in my own backyard, the Black Hills of South Dakota, I am reminded that we are a people who esteem genuine leadership to the point that we literally move mountains to honor our heroes in stone carvings, whether they be U.S. presidents or a murdered Native American named Crazy Horse.

A Greater Sense of Solidarity

It is time to recall all of that and more. I offer here a simple proposal as an example of how each of us can be more intentional in reawakening our common heritage of trust in the future for our individual benefit as well as for the good of our nation and the world.

Let us use part or all of the rebate or tax credit we will receive each pay period from the government's economic stimulus package to benefit someone besides ourselves. Give a more generous tip to the waitress, the parking valet, the barber. Buy a bag of groceries for a poor or elderly neighbor. Help a teacher who may be using his or her own funds to buy school supplies for disadvantaged students, or help parents who cannot afford medicine for a sick child. See this money as our chance to build a greater sense of solidarity in our nation, reminding us that we are all in this together. Let our generosity say to us and to others that we are confident about the future.

What I am suggesting here is that we turn around the moral of the story, and show that "where there is power in the present, there is faith in the future." Let us call one another to use creatively the power for good we each possess in the present. In doing so, we can rekindle hope for our future, and thereby bring about the kind of remaking of a nation that has always made America exceptional. **BLASE CUPICH**

BISHOP BLASE CUPICH *of Rapid City, S.D., is an occasional contributor to* ***America****.*

Truth and Prosecution

The Department of Justice has begun to release documents disclosing the Bush administration's legal justification for setting aside existing laws in the prosecution of the so-called war on terror. The revelations have included heretofore unknown claims for the discretion of the executive branch to violate the rights of Americans at home, including the military's search, detention and trial of civilians without appeal in the United States. As Scott Horton wrote in the December 2008 issue of Harper's, "No prior administration had been so systematically or brazenly lawless." In the meantime, both House and Senate are moving ahead on investigations of authoritarian rulings and policies of the Bush years. The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, has begun an effort to establish a truth commission to examine the treatment of alleged terrorists; and the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Congressman John Conyers Jr. of Michigan, has already issued a report on abuses that will serve as a basis for further probes. He has already succeeded in compelling the former Bush aides Karl Rove and Harriet E. Miers by subpoena to testify on the role politics may have played in the firing and hiring of U.S. attorneys.

President Obama has been wise to keep his distance from this necessary process of political cleansing, allowing longtime civil servants to release the records and make recommendations for prosecution. While we are not recovering from protracted civil conflict, as are many countries that have conducted truth commissions, there is a public interest in refraining from inflaming partisan tensions, especially when the great recession demands bipartisan unity in restoring economic well-being to the country. For the long term, however, there is also an undeniable public interest in holding accountable officials who would unilaterally abrogate civil liberties without due process and in setting obstacles to tyranny of the executive in any future crisis. Only on this course will we remain, as John Adams said, "a nation of laws and not of men."

The political class as a whole, and Congress in particular, will be negligent if they fail to bring to light crimes against liberty. There is no rush to judgment. Pundits point out that no one who is president will diminish the potential authority of the presidency, even though in another position he or she might regard a claim or practice abusive. Congress, for its part, is not enthusiastic. There is a proper fear of provoking rancorous partisanship at a time when it can do the greatest harm to national economic recovery. In addition, there may be a large measure of reluctance to admit the shameful negligence by Congress through lack of oversight, a supine relationship to the executive branch and the casual passage of ill-considered legislation like the Patriot Act.

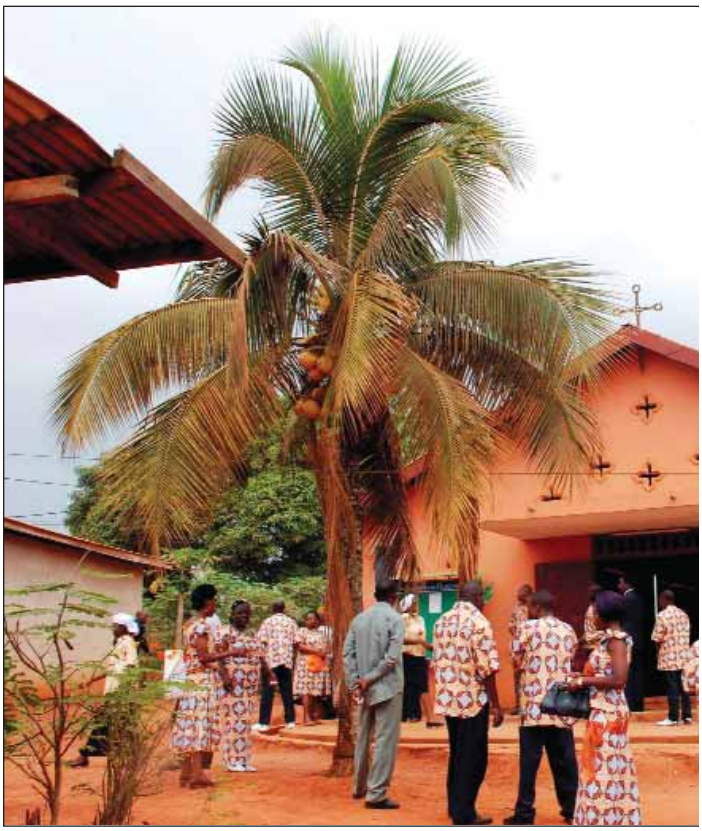
But Congress should not continue to exempt itself from guaranteeing and defending the rights of Americans. Re-examination and judgment of policies and practices that seem to amount to internal subversion must be political as well as judicial. It is not enough for principled civil servants to recommend prosecution for the most egregious offenders. Political leaders must take responsibility for bringing the truth to light, for correcting past errors and for establishing accountability on the part of those who either violated the rights of American citizens or conspired to do so, as well as for those who chose to abuse the human rights of innocent foreign nationals.

In conducting its inquiries, Congress faces difficult choices over whether to grant immunity from prosecution to suspected wrongdoers. Such grants will entail sacrificing some measure of justice and deterrence for the sake of full disclosure. In the interest of civic peace, prosecutions should be few, restricted to key policymakers and their primary legal advisers. Immunity may be given to others who can shed light on the dark secrets of the last eight years but who did not bear primary responsibility for the alleged offenses. The Abu Ghraib trials, in which the foot soldiers were punished while the commanders and policymakers escaped punishment, are the wrong model. Prosecutions, disbarment and other mechanisms of accountability are needed at the top levels of government decision making. Such accountability is needed to provide a deterrent to legalized coups in the future.

Finally, responsibility for the breach of Americans' rights falls more widely, with the Congress, the media and the public. As we have done before in these pages, we recommend that at an appropriate time a national commission be formed to assess broader responsibility for the Bush era offenses. "If the people wish to retain sovereignty," as Mr. Horton wrote, "they must also reclaim responsibility for actions committed in their name."

AFRICA

Progress and Challenges As Africa Prepares for Synod



Africans preparing for the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa, to be held in October 2009, are emphasizing the need to find concrete ways to address the problems of a continent that has made much progress since the bishops' last synod in 1994, yet still struggles with issues of poverty, justice and reconciliation. Pope Benedict XVI is scheduled to present the synod's working documents on March 19 in Cameroon. A survey of some of the issues on the agenda reveals the promise and the challenges the synod will face.

Globalization. Poor African countries "have become more entwined with globalization" since 1994, said Peter Henriot, S.J., of the Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection in Zambia. For example, free market programs and policies imposed on Zambia by the World Bank in return for loans "might have made the economy more efficient, but it has no social face," Henriot said, explaining that the required cuts in government spending have had a detrimental effect on important social programs. "We have lower literacy levels, a higher AIDS rate and other health concerns," Henriot said, because "curtailed budgets [have] had a negative impact on hospitals and schools." Henriot also noted that Africa is particularly hard hit by the global economic crisis. "The poor are becoming poorer [because] the price of basic foods in African countries is affected by skyrocketing prices in First World countries," he said.

Peace and Justice. The political landscape in many African countries has changed greatly since the last synod. Since the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which claimed the lives of an estimated 937,000 people, the country has undergone a "gradual democratization," said Anthony Egan, S.J., of the Jesuit Institute–South Africa, "and its infrastructure has improved dramatically." Yet "the hostilities and prejudices still run deep" between ethnic Tutsi and Hutu, he said.

In Angola, where a 27-year civil war ended in 2002, the once-strained relations between church and state are good, said the Rev. Belmiro Chissengueti of the Angolan bishops' conference. "For the first time church and civil society will have a chance to participate in the process" of drafting a new constitution, he said. Yet problems remain. Despite the country's immense resources, most Angolans live on less than $2 a day, and one in four children dies before the age of five.

Conflicts continue to rage in places like Sudan, where intensifying fighting threatens the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended more than two decades of civil war. There is also the challenge of how Africa is to deal with the accusations of genocide in Sudan's western region of Darfur.

Reconciliation. The 1994 synod "opened with the tremendous tragedy of Rwanda and ended with the miracle of Nelson Mandela's inauguration as president of South Africa," said Henriot. Now, says South Africa's Cardinal Wilfrid Napier of Durban, Catholic leaders from many African countries come to South Africa for help with setting up effective justice and peace structures, looking to the example of South Africa's recovery from apartheid.

For instance, Napier said, he and other Catholic leaders recently traveled to Burundi, which had just emerged from years of civil war, in order to help set up a truth and reconciliation commission like the South African commission that dealt with human rights abuses under apartheid. "We share stories to enable the church in other countries to strengthen our successes and eliminate our pitfalls in their own work." Interreligious dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims, a process essential to peace, "has improved enormously," Napier said.

St. Therese Catholic Church in Yaoundé, Cameroon

CENTRAL AMERICA

Gold Mining Loses Its Luster

Five years after Central America was dubbed a "top destination for gold mining," anti-mining movements led by the church have pushed governments in the region to freeze mining permits and to consider laws that levy heftier taxes on miners. Throughout the region there is "open hostility to mining from parts of the population and from the establishment, including the Catholic Church, and governments," said Thomas Power, an economist at the University of Montana. "There are public protests and ongoing political actions to constrain mining."

In several cases bishops have criticized mining operations, arguing that they cause extensive environmental and social damage that outweighs the community investment and taxes paid by mining companies. "Mining is [environmentally] dangerous in Central America. The methods that are used to separate gold and silver from the rest of the matter utilize cyanide, which is highly pollutant," Archbishop José Escobar Alas of San Salvador told the French news agency Agence France-Presse in mid-February.

In late February, Bishop Álvaro Ramazzini Imeri of San Marcos, Guatemala, whose diocese is home to that nation's largest gold mine, led an anti-mining rally and called for a two-year national moratorium on mining licenses, a move that has already curbed investment in mines. "It's undoubtedly a major deterrent to future investment in the region. We stopped all of our work last July and made it abundantly clear that we're not moving forward," said Barbara Henderson, senior vice president of investor relations for Canadian-based Pacific Rim Mining, which has three mining sites in El Salvador. "I can't imagine it's not a deterrent for other mining companies as well."

Gold speculators have long been aware of Central American gold deposits. Because the gold is thinly distributed throughout the soil, sodium cyanide is needed to separate the gold and silver ore from other, less valuable metals, a process that is not environmentally friendly and is very costly. So mining companies largely avoided exploring Central America until the price of gold began to spike. In 2000, the metal traded for about $300 an ounce. This year, it has traded above $950 an ounce and may top $1,000. In response to the rising value of gold, mining companies began to explore the area and governments handed out hundreds of permits. In 2005 the Marlin Mine, one of the largest foreign investments in Guatemala, opened in San Marcos.

Bishop Ramazzini soon began talking openly about the mine's negative effects, and controversy followed. Local residents, who said they were not informed about the mine before it opened, engaged in protests that at times turned violent. At least two anti-mining activists were killed, and Bishop Ramazzini has received death threats.

Bishops in neighboring countries followed Ramazzini's anti-mining position. The church's stance, coupled with protests and an international publicity campaign, gave the issue traction. Now governments that were once openly welcoming mines are reconsidering. The number of licenses for exploration in Guatemala fell from 740 in 2004 to fewer than 250 in 2007, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mines. In Honduras, one mine has shut down, leaving the country with four sites. El Salvador has not seen any new operations open since 2004.

Environmental activists in Costa Rica

Calls for New Colombian Policy

Colombian community leaders urged President Barack Obama on March 5 to reform U.S. policy toward Colombia to help end the destructive trade in illegal drugs and more than 40 years of civil war. Speaking on Capitol Hill, Msgr. Héctor Henao Gaviria, head of Caritas Colombia, said Colombia's civil war has had a "very grave humanitarian impact," especially on displaced families, adding that there must be a joint and "negotiated solution to the armed conflict."

Colombia is second only to Sudan in the number of internally displaced people, said several Colombian community leaders who also participated in the discussion. Participants also urged Obama to rework the U.S.-Colombia anti-drug policy to "acknowledge the principle of shared responsibility between producer and consumer countries in facing this scourge." Colombia is Latin America's largest producer of coca, the main ingredient of cocaine, which is transported north and consumed in the United States.

Coalition Addresses Climate Change

During the Easter season, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change plans to unveil publicly a "Catholic Climate Covenant," a new initiative to make U.S. Catholics more aware of what they can do to stem climate change and its effects. The covenant includes "The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor," modeled after St. Francis of Assisi, whose "Canticle of the Sun" praised God's creation in the form of earth, water and creatures. The pledge asks Catholics to pray and reflect on the duty to care for God's creation and protect the poor and vulnerable; to learn about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change; and to advocate for Catholic principles and priorities in discussions and decisions about climate change, especially their impact on the poor and vulnerable.

Settlement on West Bank Endangered

Ecumenical News International reports that a development housing hundreds of Palestinian Christians in the West Bank is threatened by the construction of a security fence and other facilities by the Israeli government. According to the report, Israeli officials issued a demolition order for all the buildings in 2002, which are built on property owned by the Greek Orthodox Church. The Israeli government maintained that the land is located in a zone known as Area C, where Israel has complete military and civil control. Although the demolition orders have not been carried out, the residents of the housing project say the threat is growing. "We are concerned that any new [Israeli] government will close us in or confiscate our land," one resident told the news service. "We will be in a cage if they don't demolish the complex," he said.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Peter Bray

Pope Benedict XVI has written a letter to the world's bishops defending his decision to lift the excommunications of four traditionalist bishops of the **Society of St. Pius X** and acknowledging that the controversy was "a misadventure that was for me unforeseeable," according to reports in the Italian media. ✦ The shooting of a policeman in **Northern Ireland** was denounced by Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore, a Catholic, and his Church of Ireland counterpart, who said there is "no going back" to the days of violence that killed more than 3,500 people over 30 years. ✦ Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia said March 9 that President Obama's executive order reversing the ban on federal funding for **embryonic stem cell research** represents "a sad victory of politics over science and ethics." ✦ A bill proposed in the **Connecticut state legislature** that would have given laypeople financial control of their parishes in Connecticut was withdrawn by its sponsors on March 10 in the wake of heated controversy. ✦ Peter Bray, F.S.C., assumed his position in March as the eighth vice chancellor of **Bethlehem University**, which is administered jointly by the Vatican and the Christian Brothers.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR.

A Covenant to Serve

As I write this, I am two weeks away from making my 14th trip to post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. I am reflecting on how in late August 2005, four-fifths of that city was flooded when three poorly-built levees broke beneath Katrina's blows. The resulting death and devastation made grim headlines worldwide.

So did official Washington's shameful, almost surreal failure to rush resources to the rescue. The disaster's predominantly African-American, low-income victims were not treated as fellow citizens. Some politicians and journalists even took to calling these suddenly homeless Americans "refugees."

Were it not for heroics by the U.S. Coast Guard, Katrina's initial human, property and financial toll would have been much worse. And were it not for nonprofit organizations, ranging from little local congregations to citywide operations like Catholic Charities of New Orleans, the post-Katrina recovery process would have moved even slower.

It has been three-and-a-half years since biblical-sized floods blanketed the Big Easy. Poverty, crime and other ills that were bad before are bad or worse there today. Affordable housing, health care and other basic human needs are far from well met. Many Hispanic immigrants involved in hazardous clean-up or construction jobs continue to be exploited by unscrupulous employers.

Still, New Orleans now has about three-fourths of its pre-Katrina population. Even in these bad financial times, its economy is jazzy and growing. Its natives' infectiously warm hospitality and inimitable civic spirit have been revived. Its struggling Hispanic residents have given the historic city's demographic gumbo its first mighty 21st-century stirring. Volunteer-saints from all across the United States still go marching in to help.

As on my previous post-Katrina trips, I will not be alone. Over 100 spring break student-volunteers from the University of Pennsylvania will be with me. Though Penn is a proudly nonsectarian Ivy League university, founded by Benjamin Franklin, it boasts undergraduate student religious life organizations that make for a marvelous faith-based mosaic: Jewish students with the Hillel Center, Catholic students with the Newman Center and over a dozen other groups. I am proud that since September 2005, these groups and other Penn undergraduates and recent graduates have dedicated over 1,000 weeks of service in post-Katrina New Orleans.

> The inimitable civic spirit of New Orleans has been revived.

But my Penn pride here also directly touches my Catholic identity. Speaking at Penn's Wharton School of Business on Oct. 14, 2005, Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes of New Orleans energized the predominantly non-Catholic crowd by telling how the archdiocese was opening its arms and its schools to poor children of every faith and of no faith. Non-Catholic colleagues who have never held a brief for the church were moved (in several cases to tears) by the soft-spoken archbishop.

Thereafter, in communications with me and other Penn colleagues, Jim Kelly, C.E.O. of Catholic Charities of New Orleans, laid down a civic marker: If Penn would make a five-year commitment to service-learning in the city, Catholic Charities would co-sponsor internships and other initiatives with Penn there.

An elite secular university located 1,100 miles away working in tandem with a Catholic nonprofit? Kelly termed the improbable secular-religious civic partnership "a covenant to serve." Its early fruits are captured in a video with that title on a Penn Web site (www.foxleadership.org).

As Kelly has so eloquently stated, the covenant is not between secular Penn and its Catholic partners, but between both of them and the people whose lives were shattered and shuttered by the floods, people who now seek to rebuild their city and reclaim their communities.

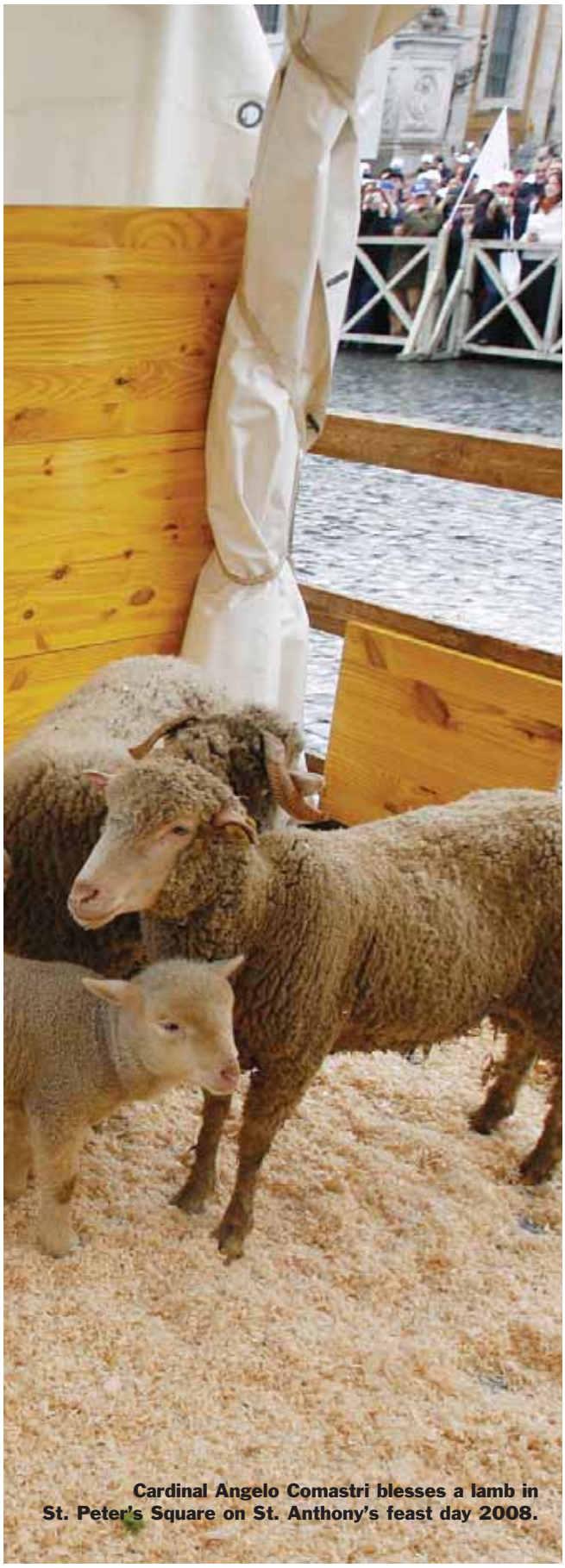
The covenant continues. Starting this summer, five recent Penn graduates will be working full time in New Orleans on various Catholic Charities community-serving projects.

Maybe the partnership is not so improbable after all. Franklin started Philadelphia's first library company, giving it a Latin motto that translates thus: "To pour forth benefits for the common good is divine." Penn's founder emphasized deeds over words. He was also for supporting any faith that forged good works.

Sound familiar?

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR. *is the author of* Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future *(Univ. of California Press, 2007).*

PHOTO: REUTERS/DARIO PIGNATELLI



Cardinal Angelo Comastri blesses a lamb in St. Peter's Square on St. Anthony's feast day 2008.

Our responsibility to all creation

Animal Welfare

BY KATE BLAKE

When it comes to animal welfare, the average Christian often displays a staggering lack of Christian values. Most Christians will say they love animals and wish them no ill; yet when addressing basic questions of animal welfare, they do not give the answer that Christian faith demands, but rather an answer born of the disordered, excessive culture in which we live, one shockingly unimpeded by the checks of religion: I'm at the top of the food chain. I'll eat what I want to eat. What do I care if they live in cages? They're just pigs. A majority of Christians may even suspect that concern for animals as a part of God's creation is akin to idolatry and that to care for creation is somehow to displace God.

It is not, however, a displacement of God to concern oneself with the just treatment of what the Creator has made. In fact, it dishonors the Creator when one ignores the welfare of what has been created. In taking the time to fashion every last being in its rightful place and in attending to detail in placing each one just so, God demands that we who are blessed with a capacity to harness the earth's resources do so responsibly. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, "Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives."

Yet few Americans acknowledge any moral imperative beyond the maximum economic value of a resource. Rather, the feeling is that all of creation is ordered to our use, and that the only question we need consider is what that chicken or calf or rabbit can do for me. Creation, then, is seen as having no purpose beyond the serving of our needs. We

KATE BLAKE *is a senior at the University of Alabama at Huntsville.*

forget we ourselves are a part of creation. So we do our best to keep it from encroaching on our mechanized lives.

Who Is the Master?

Few want to be reminded that we live within nature. We shield ourselves from the things that nature does, harboring the feeling that when nature does what it is supposed to do, such as rain or snow, it is inconveniencing our civilized way of life. Yet our place in creation is not that of master. The natural world is given to us by God in exchange for our responsible occupation of it. As the catechism puts it: "Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute...it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation." Creation owes us nothing. Rather, we owe creation reparation.

What many Christians fail to recognize is that most violations of the integrity of creation stem from a continuing desire to reorder creation in the way we would like it to be. So we genetically engineer crops to operate according to our demands, and we treat animals as if they have no right to fresh air and grass. In winking at questions of animal welfare, in stating that we are masters and that animals are at our disposal, we continue egregiously and willfully to commit that same first sin.

It is not the consumption or use of animals that constitutes the problem but the methods used to treat them. In his book *Love and Responsibility*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Intelligent human beings are not only required not to squander or destroy…natural resources, but to use them with restraint.... In his treatment of animals in particular, since they are beings endowed with feeling and sensitive to pain, man is required to ensure that the use of these creatures is never attended by suffering or physical torture."

Church Writings on Nature

Oh, God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals to whom Thou gavest the earth in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail.

—St. Basil of Caesarea

In this desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of the senseless destruction of the natural environment lies an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day. Man, who discovers his capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through his own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are. Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have its own requisites and a prior God-given purpose, which man can indeed develop but must not betray. Instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him.

—Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, No. 37

If you have people who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have people who deal likewise with their fellow human beings.

—St. Francis of Assisi

God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image.

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2417

Down on the Farm

In all likelihood, though, we seldom give a thought to the means by which Sunday dinner arrives at our table. One Web site (www.factoryfarm.org) explains: "While many of the techniques utilized on factory farms were developed to make production more profitable, other techniques were implemented to increase efficiency and safety. However, these practices often cause discomfort, pain, and stress to animals, while inhibiting their natural, instinctual behaviors."

According to the Web site, pigs, weighing 500 pounds fully grown, are born and raised in spaces only 20 inches across. They have no room to turn or lie down. They are forced to defecate in this same space; and contrary to expectation, animals do not defecate where they eat and sleep when they have a choice.

In nature, pigs root, forage and build nests; in the modern factory farm, they have nothing but a concrete floor. Tumors, sores and legs fractured from lack of movement are common. Chickens face a similar fate. They are crammed into cages so small they cannot extend their wings and are housed in buildings without windows, depriving them of sunlight.

Such conditions are widespread. In a paper entitled "Farm Animal Health and Well-Being," prepared for the Minnesota Planning Agency Environmental Quality Board, Marlene K. Halverson relates: "All farm animals except pastured species and those in enriched, extensive confinement are denied the possibility of performing species-specific natural behaviors, such as dustbathing (an important grooming activity for chickens) or nest-building (an important maternal activity for sows)."

When an animal is denied an opportunity to act or behave in the ways God created it to do, it is no longer living in natural conditions. That is a violation of the harmony of creation. Our attempt to circumvent nature and God's creation is nothing less than the sin of pride.

Our Christian Duty

Though it should be evident that none of this activity is in keeping with God's intentions for creation, for many Christians it remains a nonissue. Why? If, as the Bible tells us, not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God's knowledge, how can we justify contempt for that sparrow? Animal welfare and questions of ethical farming practices cannot be dismissed with charges of idolatry. More to the point, when one person chooses to abstain from meat derived from animals raised in unnatural conditions, while a second demands to be served only the tenderest, juiciest cuts of sirloin, it is not the first who is raising up idols.

As Pope John Paul II stated in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*: "Instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature...." That stark observation should prompt in us a renewed sense of commitment to God's creation and a soulful consideration of our relationship to it. A

Tushar Gandhi's Nonviolent Path

BY ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD

"For a long time, I admired John Wayne more than Gandhi." Mahatma Gandhi's great-grandson Tushar, 48, a burly man with a short, neat, salt-and-pepper beard, was sitting in his kitchen, with its yellow painting of Kasturba at her spinning wheel, in a rundown residential area of Santa Cruz in Mumbai. He was trying to dispel the notion that there was any inherited magic in the Gandhi name that helped frame his belief in nonviolence.

"I felt that the quick draw was the solution to every problem," said Tushar. "Violence seemed a much more glamorous option than nonviolence."

Mahatma Gandhi may be central to India's independence story. His wrinkly face may appear on all its money. But in India in the 21st century there are few true Gandhians left. His message has been exiled in laurel leaves. To his people he has become an intimate stranger.

Reclaiming Nonviolence

"When the constitution was being adopted," recalls Tushar, "Gandhi was very keen that an adherence to nonviolence be included in the preamble itself. Also, in the manifesto of the Congress Party." Party leaders balked at the idea. "For them, [nonviolence] had been just a convenient method of getting independence. It was like a medicine that had passed its use-by date."

As director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Tushar is trying to apply Gandhi's medicine to the body of India. He administers different doses. In 2005, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Salt March, Tushar re-enacted the 235-mile march from his great-grandfather's ashram in Gujarat to the sea at Dandi. It was staged to "awaken the people of the world to stand up for peace and nonviolence and reaffirm the power of right over might." The march included Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi. Mainly, though, Tushar goes out to speak to the young. "We have lost our today," he laments, despairing of his own generation, "but we haven't lost our tomorrow."

ON THE WEB
From the archives, the editors on the death of Mahatma Gandhi.
americamagazine.org/pages

ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD *is a freelance journalist based in New York.*

In the post-9/11 world of terrorism, Tushar Gandhi is met with robust skepticism. Young Indians ask him how he would disarm a suicide bomber nonviolently.

"They don't ask, 'What turns a human being into a suicide bomber? What is the cause?' They see the suicide bomber as the problem, Islam as the problem. I tell them it is glib to say Islam promises heaven for martyrs and just leave it at that. Would any of them agree to swap his or her life with all its troubles for a death that allegedly brings with it all sorts of wonderful rewards? Of course not."

As a thought experiment, Tushar asks young people to reflect on a reality where death is considered preferable to life. What would such a reality be like? Clotted with anger and resentment, probably. Ripe for exploitation. "It gets them thinking. I say to them, 'You can stop a terrorist with a bullet, but you can't stop terrorism with a bullet.'"

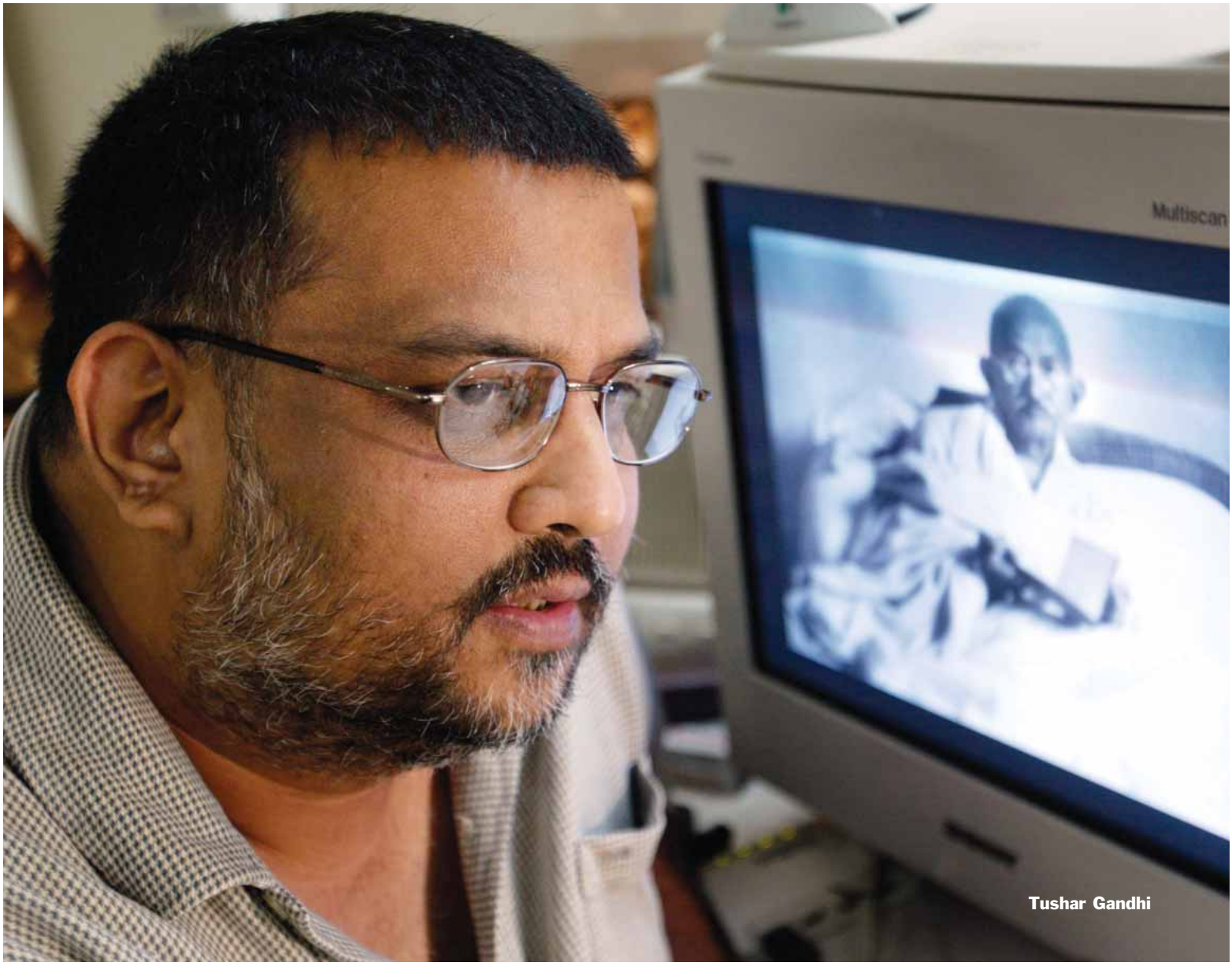
Speaking on Behalf of Muslims

On the Muslim question, he is satisfied to stand where his great-grandfather stood: squarely on the margins. "With Partition," Tushar says, "and later with the demolition of Babri Masjid by Hindus [December 1992], and the Muslim riots that followed, there has been a silent resentment against Muslims in India."

In 1947 British India was split into the independent countries of India and Pakistan. In the process, as Muslims fled north from India to Pakistan and Hindus fled in the opposite direction, at least a million people were slaughtered, slashing open a crevasse between the two communities that has never been bridged.

Tushar says that the Muslims "are treated with prejudice and suspicion, and a little bit of hatred mixed in. When I say 'a little bit,' I am talking about the so-called moderates, not the fanatics, of course, who hate Muslims a lot. This is very tragic because our land depends on Hindu-Muslim unity."

Once, at an Indian film festival whose theme was nonviolence, he was astonished by a standing ovation lavished on the Israeli consul general when he arrived. An outspoken critic of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Tushar Gandhi rose to challenge the audience:



Tushar Gandhi

"What has Israel done to warrant such a great reception for its consul general? What am I missing?" He was told, "Here is a person whose country gives tit for tat."

"Regrettably, wherever in the world there is a conflict involving Muslims," Tushar explains, "many Hindus sympathize with the other side whether it is justified or not. These are the people who believe that had Mahatma Gandhi not reassured Muslims that they should stay in India, that India was their land, all the Muslims would have fled during Partition, and India would be rid of them. The anger he stirred up over this was one of the reasons he was killed."

A Voice in the Wilderness

Tushar finds himself throttled by uneasy alliances. As much as he loathes the Congress Party for its bloody suppression of Kashmir and its embrace of a nuclear India, he supports it against the Bharatiya Janata Party. "The B.J.P.'s castist, religion-based ideology can only be countered by a powerful organization like Congress." He adds ruefully, "Congress is unappreciative of my support."

Likewise, while he belongs to a Palestinian support group, its two-tiered approach toward the use of violence is a point of contention. Most see the violence of the Palestinians as justifiable, the violence of the Israelis as deplorable. "I say all violence must be condemned. That puts me on the losing side." To him, the choice is not between caving in or converting. He has his view and he will express it, even if his allies will eat him up for it.

The young Gandhi does not compare himself to the old; he is not, he admits, "a totally nonviolent person." There are times he says he slips and finds himself wondering whether violence is perhaps more suitable in a given situation than nonviolence.

"I am still traveling on my journey of nonviolence. I have a long way to go. It's like an expedition to Mt. Everest; even reaching the base camp is an achievement. For me, the base camp is not even in sight at the moment." A

REUTERS/SHERWIN CRASTO

LENTEN REFLECTION

A Little Patience

The fifth in a series for Lent

BY PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN

For those of us with a "Type A" personality, keeping anger and impatience under wraps poses a continual challenge. The season of Lent, though, gives us a chance to turn things around. We A's can attempt to replace wrath, one of the seven deadly sins, with its counterpart, the cardinal virtue of patience. And if we pay attention and remain open, opportunities to do so present themselves not just during this season but also throughout the year. The trick is to recognize these moments when they come along.

Patience is the will to "bear provocation with calmness and self-control." An opportunity to do just that arose for me last Christmas Eve. I was attending Mass at an out-of-town parish. Seated behind me was an attractive, well-dressed young woman with a lovely singing voice. Unexpectedly she broke into loud, uncontrollable laughter. This created a stir in the congregation, particularly among those in the rear of the church where she sat (one row behind me). Then silence. Later on, she began shouting and swinging her arms. I felt anger welling up within me at these interruptions and outbursts during the liturgy. How disrespectful, I thought. Finally, during Communion, she leapt from her pew and ran up an aisle and onto the altar platform before she could be subdued and assisted.

For days I could not stop thinking about her, replaying in my mind's eye the actions and harsh words of some congregants toward her. Clearly she was not a well woman. (I later learned she was off her medications, and her mother had brought her to church but did not stay with her.) While some individuals were shushing her (and worse), I prayed for this obviously tortured soul and also for tolerance and patience, the kind of patience the good Lord shows to us.

In his letter to the Colossians, St. Paul exhorts them to give up "getting angry, being bad-tempered" and instead to "be clothed in sincere compassion…gentleness and patience." "Bear with one another," he insists (3:8, 12-13). And Thomas à Kempis, in *The Imitation of Christ*, advises: "Be patient, my soul; await the fulfillment of God's promise, and you shall enjoy the abundance of His goodness in Heaven." I have no doubt that God's promise and God's patience extend in full measure to that young woman as much as to anyone else.

Most of us need help to develop greater patience. Fortunately, there are many persons to whom we can turn and from whom we can learn and grow, like those who embody the virtue. A great Old Testament example is Job—a good and upright man tested by suffering and misfortune, yet unwavering in his faith. We can also enlist the intercession of St. Monica, a model of patience, who for years prayed quietly for the conversion of her dissolute son, Augustine. It is a truism that good things come to those who wait.

We also should not forget those persons, living or deceased, who are unique to each of us: parents, teachers, mentors, siblings and others who have demonstrated a patient spirit throughout their lives. I think of people who taught by example the importance of retaining calm and a sense of equanimity amid times of stress.

Still, in today's busy, fast-paced world, impatience abounds. (Is the A population taking over? I wonder.) We simply cannot wait. We need a quick solution. As a result we see more and more road rage and crowd conflict. In New York last Black Friday, a clerk about to open a store was stampeded to death by hordes of early-morning bargain hunters who had waited for hours in the parking lot. So fixated were they on getting in that they stepped on or over the young man and never looked back.

As Christians, we are called to be tolerant and understanding. Jesus commands us to love one another, to be in harmony with one another. And although the pursuit of virtue is a lifetime endeavor, we have the power of the Spirit at our disposal—through the sacraments, prayer, Scripture reading and meditation. If these are not our daily companions, we tread a rocky path.

Thank God we have time this Lent to grow in patience. Why not use it? A

ART: JULIE LONNEMAN

PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN *is literary editor of* ***America.***

ART | LEO J. O'DONOVAN

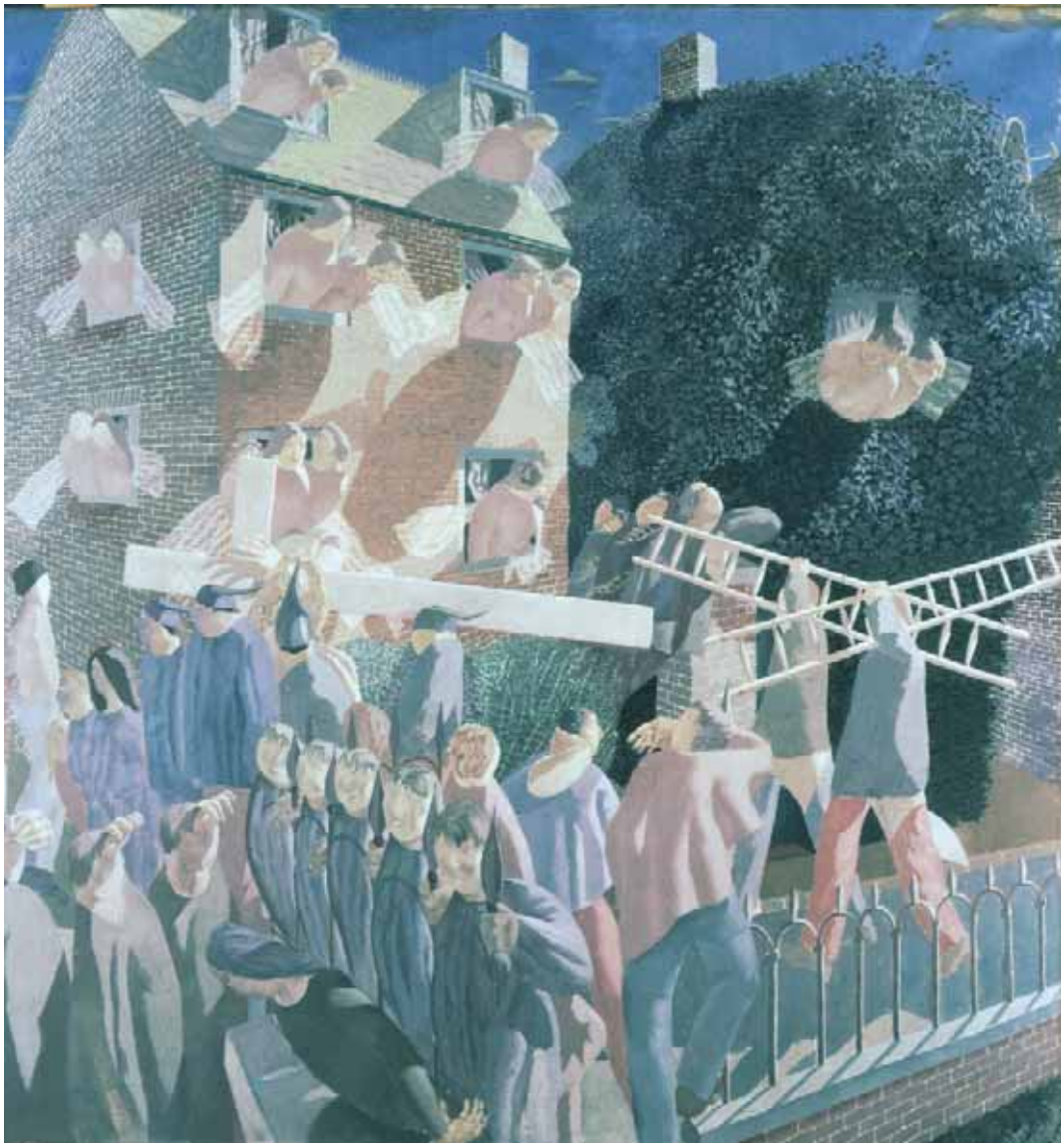
THE EVERYDAY CROSS

A Lenten reflection on Stanley Spencer's 'Christ'

When St. Paul writes to the Galatians about the world having been crucified to him and he to the world (6:14), he is speaking of his death to all that is opposed to God. His life, by contrast, comes from faith and baptism in the paschal mystery of Christ. Apart from Georges Rouault, no artist of the 20th century seems to have experienced this confession, and indeed the whole Christian story, as so closely following the patterns of his own life as Stanley Spencer (1891-1959).

Born at Cookham on Thames, Berkshire, as the youngest of eight children, Spencer was educated at home in Fernlea, the house his grandfather had built in Cookham. There he experienced a kind of Edenic childhood. Having commuted daily to London to study at the Slade School from 1908 to 1912, he set most of his notable early pictures, which had religious themes, in Cookham and its surrounding landscape.

The serenity and even sanctity he found there were ruptured when he enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1915 and was posted to Macedonia. He returned home only in December 1918. The rest of his life would be a search for his former sense of wholeness, "a project of remembrance and reconstruction," as one critic has put it. In his painting "Christ Carrying the Cross" (1920), we find a major statement of that theme.



"CHRIST CARRYING THE CROSS," BY STANLEY SPENCER
PHOTO: TATE GALLERY, LONDON / ART RESOURCE, NY

With his mother's grief at his departure for the war still haunting his soul, Spencer shows a determined Christ (with the profile of his father), accompanied by four soldiers in winged helmets, just as he passes Fernlea, with its adjacent ivy-covered cottage, The Nest, to the right. Behind the cross, two workers carry ladders that will be used to raise it. (They form a St. Andrew's cross.) In the lower left corner, "Ma" has been metamorphosed into the grieving Mary. Through a fence that seems made of spears, she is observed by

five white-faced, agonized men who represent at once Stanley and the five Spencer sons gone to war.

A throng of figures (the artist's family and friends) peers at the spectacle from Fernlea and The Nest; they are given angels' wings by the lace curtains that blow out of the windows on the warm summer afternoon. (Residents of Cookham would recognize the low July sun casting the light of evening.) With its pale, chalky color harmonies, flattened figures and distorted space, the painting recalls the Italian primitives Spencer had loved as a young man. The scene is at once ordinary and mysterious, realistic and visionary, a tableau of deep emotion from which the viewer is nevertheless distanced. (The trio of young men in the bottom center represents Stanley and two friends as onlookers, not participants.)

Spencer's career went through significant reversals and revivals after the celebrated postwar paintings of the 1920s. "The Resurrection, Cookham" of 1924-27, largely a celebration of the sexuality he discovered through his marriage to Hilda Carlin, and his "Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere" of 1930-32 were particular successes. Involved in marital difficulties and an obsession with a fellow artist, Patricia Preece, in the later 1930s, Spencer experienced a restoration of his finances and reputation through his monumental series, "Shipbuilding on the Clyde." In 1955 he enjoyed a major retrospective at the Tate Britain.

In this Lenten season, "Christ Carrying the Cross" may seem to transcend its origin and time. Spencer's biographer, Kenneth Pople, wrote that the cross "represented for Stanley, as he assumed it represented for all, a necessary submission to the perpetual confusions and frustrations of existence from which it is our purpose to seek redemptive meaning." What Christian does not sometimes reduce Calvary to a conundrum or to something we may accept but despair

of ever understanding?

But what if we take these words of Jesus not as an obscure vision but as a redeeming reality: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34)? What if the sorrows and agonies of life are not simply challenges we must accept and ascribe to the all-encompassing mercy of the Crucified? What if we are meant not simply to accept our redeemed mortality, but dimly to discern that in all suffering we are truly one with our wounded Lord? All those wounds, our own and those far more fearful ones borne by other members of the human family, echo the depths of a humanity that the incarnate and crucified Word shared with us—and shares still.

ON THE WEB
Rob Weinert-Kendt reviews two new plays with religious themes.
americamagazine.org

In Lent, approaching once more the celebration of our paschal mystery, we journey not simply toward acceptance of what is unintelligible on human terms. We journey with Jesus toward Absolute Acceptance itself, which invites us into acceptance, the Father of Jesus whose Spirit sings daily to each and all of us: "Yes, here is my love. Take it. It is yours."

LEO J. O'DONOVAN, S.J., *is emeritus president of Georgetown University.*

BOOKS | GERALD P. FOGARTY

TWO POLES OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

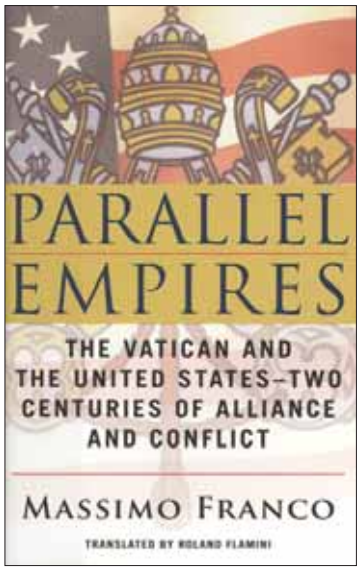
PARALLEL EMPIRES

The Vatican and the United States—Two Centuries of Alliance and Conflict

By Massimo Franco, translated by Roland Flamini
Doubleday. 240p $26
ISBN 9780385518932

Massimo Franco, a distinguished columnist for the Corriere della Sera of Milan, presents an interesting thesis in this book, which he states in the introduction: "In probing the relationship between these two extremities of Western civilization—the United States at one end and the papacy at the other, it is also possible to find some lateral answers to other aspects of the equation involving Europe, and the very essence of the West itself." The book's 16 chapters are a sweeping survey of relations between the United States and the Holy See over the past 220 years.

Franco's journalistic eye, however, is better than his historical one. His first and last chapters focus on the United States' participation in the funeral of Pope John Paul II. For the first time in history, an American president attended a papal funeral. In fact, not only was George W. Bush present, but also Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush. Jimmy Carter would also have liked to be included, but the American entourage was limited to five and room had to be left for Laura Bush and Condoleezza Rice. Franco contrasts the scene of three presidents in St. Peter's with John F. Kennedy's reluctance to arrive in Rome in the summer of 1963 in time for John XXIII's funeral. He concludes his presentation with a chapter on "three presidents in Saint Peter's Square," in which he notes the groundbreaking action of an evangelical president in declaring a national period of mourning for the deceased pontiff, complete with flags flown at half-staff and the speculation in the Iranian press that Bush was meeting with the American cardinals to influence the conclave.



In between the first and last chapters on presidential participation in the papal funeral, Franco offers a series of vignettes to illustrate the earlier tension and efforts at rapport between the United States and the Vatican. In 1846 the United States established ministerial relations with the papal states in recognition of Pius IX's reputed liberalism. Incidentally, the rank of minister rather than ambassador was not a slight, as the author implies, because the United States did not have ambassadors until the 1890s. He recounts the trip of Archbishop Gaetano Bedini to the United States in the winter of 1853-1854 amid protests, some of them violent, for his role in repressing the rebellion against papal rule in Bologna, but he omits the negative reaction to Bedini's visit by the American bishops. Franco also reports that the U.S. Congress ended funding for the mission to the papal states in 1867, but fails to mention that the mission to Portugal also lost its funding because the American minister was critical of Radical Reconstruction, the Republican Congress' policy of treating the former Confederate states as conquered territories subject to numerous

restrictions before they could be readmitted to the union.

While Franco successfully places the relations between the United States and the Holy See against the background of American anti-Catholicism, he (or his translator) becomes sloppy in presenting historical facts. He states, for example, that in 1939 Franklin Roosevelt "resumed the tradition of sending a personal representative" to the pope. In fact, Roosevelt invented the title for Myron C. Taylor as a substitute for establishing diplomatic relations that would have required Senate approval. The author likewise says nothing about the rude way in which Taylor's "mission" was ended in 1950 without any notification to the Vatican. Nor does the author note the actual "resumption" of the personal representative to the pope by Richard Nixon in 1970 at the height of the Vietnam War, a practice continued by subsequent presidents until Ronald Reagan established full diplomatic relations.

One of the major drawbacks of Franco's study is his virtual neglect of the American church, its people and hierarchy. In discussing the establishment of American-Vatican diplomatic relations in 1984, for example, he says nothing of Reagan's motivation to rein in the American bishops, who had issued their pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace* in May 1983, condemning the first use of nuclear arms; it said deterrence was tolerable only if it was leading to negotiations for disarmament. Some treatment of the American church is necessary, since most Europeans know that Catholics are a minority within the American population but are not aware that they still number 65 million in almost 200 dioceses.

One of Franco's most informative chapters concerns Cardinal Pio Laghi's mission to President Bush in 2003 to present the papal arguments against invading Iraq, when the former pronuncio to the United States was shabbily treated. Although Laghi narrated his experience to an Italian journalist, this is the first time, to my knowledge, that the story has appeared in English. Yet the ease with which the Holy See shifted from criticism of American policy in Iraq to what Franco sees as support of Bush over Senator John Kerry, a Catholic, remains problematic. Did the Vatican support Bush in the 2004 presidential election because of a coinciding interest or because leading bishops supported him—or opposed Kerry?

Unfortunately, Franco relied for much of his historical information on the unreliable work of Jim Nicholson, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, President George W. Bush's ambassador to the Holy See and then secretary of veterans' affairs. For instance, Franco accepts Nicholson's statement that the Holy See consulted George Washington in 1788 to see if he had any objection to the pope naming a bishop in the United States. What actually happened? In 1783, at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Paris recognizing American independence, the cardinal prefect of Propaganda, the missionary arm of the pope, instructed the nuncio to Paris to ask the American minister, Benjamin Franklin, if his government had any objection to the appointment of a bishop. Franklin replied that religious matters were beyond the competence of his government, then operating under the Articles of Confederation. He nevertheless forwarded the request to the Congress, the president of which was James Madison, who seconded Franklin's opinion. The American clergy then obtained permission to elect their bishop and chose John Carroll, who gained papal approval in 1789, the same year Washington took office.

Another error occurs on the meaning of "Holy See." When treating the

establishment of ministerial relations, Franco notes that the State Department instructed its diplomats that they were accredited to the pope as head of the Papal States and not as head of the church. He then paraphrases Nicholson's argument that "to this day a fundamental distinction is made between the Holy See and the Roman Catholic Church to avoid confusion" that would arise if he had been accredited to the pope as the head of the Catholic Church. The Vatican, however, states: "The expression Holy See refers to the supreme authority of the Church, and thus the Pope as Bishop of Rome and head of the College of Bishops." Whether Nicholson knew it or not, he, like other ambassadors to the Holy See, was accredited to the pope as head of the Catholic Church.

Despite these reservations, which might be due to the translation, *Parallel Empires* provides an important analysis and interpretation of Vatican-American relations from the viewpoint of a distinguished European observer. For most Americans, including many Catholics, the Vatican is a negligible, if not completely unknown, player on the world stage. This book furnishes a necessary corrective to that view.

GERALD P. FOGARTY, S.J., *holds currently the Loyola Chair of History at Fordham University in New York City.*

MYLES N. SHEEHAN

CAN PRAYER TRUMP PAIN?

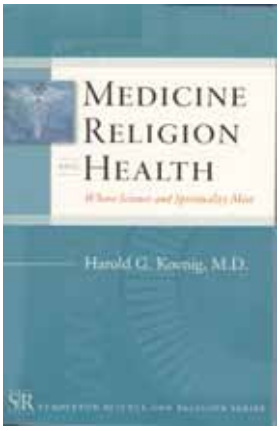
MEDICINE, RELIGION, AND HEALTH

Where Science and Spirituality Meet

By Harold G. Koenig, M.D.
Templeton Foundation Press. 240p
$17.95
ISBN 9781599471419

As a Jesuit priest who practices medicine, I must say that some of the more tiresome moments in my career have been encounters with reporters who want to do a "little story" on spirituality and medicine. Some go well, with insightful questions and good dialogue. Too often, however, the camera does a close-up on the reporter who, in a breathy voice and with way too much facial expression, asks: "And now, Dr. Sheehan, tell me: How many people have you cured by your prayer?" I have not been smart enough to answer: "More than you and I will know."

For those people who, like the reporter, are hoping for something sensational and a bit weird, Harold Koenig's book will be a disappointment. For those who are intrigued by the potential connections between religious faith, maintaining health and recovery from illness, *Medicine, Religion, and Health* provides a down-to-earth, matter-of-fact and carefully reasoned review of the topic. Koenig's explicit goal "is to explore and make sense of some of the recent research on religion, spirituality, and health." In focusing on this goal, he is not asking about the theological dimensions of the link between spirituality and health; that task will be covered in a volume on which he is currently working. Koenig is focusing on a review of research and looking at links between faith and health outcomes.



The author, as would be expected in a book that is meant as a popular review of the scientific literature, is methodical and careful in presenting his findings. He introduces the topic by defining spirituality and religion and considering how the definitions are important in research but perhaps a bit less important in day-to-day practice. In preparing to relate the results of research, Koenig stresses that in our current aging society, where health care costs are skyrocketing, carefully considering new approaches to health care interventions, like the impact of spirituality and religion, is not simply intrinsically interesting but could provide major savings and improvements in health care delivery. Having provided definitions and a compelling reason for interest in the results, he then reviews the topic of known and potential mechanisms by which the mind influences the body. Then comes a series of chapters that look at specific areas where research has been conducted on the links between religion and health.

Koenig gives evidence of beneficial outcomes where religion is a factor in general health, longevity, mental health, endocrine and immune function, cardiovascular disease and diseases related to stress and behavior. What I find attractive about Koenig's review is that he is not making an argument on exactly how religion influences these health-related outcomes, but is looking at the evidence that health outcomes are influenced. Especially useful for those who might question the strength of the connections that Koenig presents is the careful explanation of confounding and explanatory variables in determining causality in scientific studies. If the good outcomes are simply the result of confounding variables, then it is not faith or religion that makes the difference. If, however, there is something associated with

religious belief or faith that explains the result, then there is a causal link. Koenig argues well that much of the criticism of results that he highlights is based on a lack of attention to what may be an explanatory variable versus a confounding variable.

As might be expected, much of this book is fairly detailed. It is written at the level of an intelligent non-scientist reader: it makes some demands on the reader and provides good instruction in return. For a more casual reader, I would recommend the final chapter on clinical applications of the research that has been presented. Once again, Koenig continues his no-nonsense style in listing seven common-sense reasons why clinicians should pay attention to the links between religion and health. He then discusses appropriate ways to work with patients that engage their beliefs while not alienating individuals who do not believe or whose beliefs differ from the clinician. Especially important is his discussion for clinicians about the importance of engaging the faith community and recognizing the skills and talents that trained hospital chaplains can bring to bear. A physician referral for a patient to a chaplain can be a crucial move in facilitating the patient's well-being.

As someone who has felt that religious faith and a person's spirituality influence people's approach to illness and health, but who has been underwhelmed by the research with which I was familiar, this book is of great value. It makes me understand that my personal experience has been confirmed in a number of studies, that the research is not explaining exactly what is happening, that there is plenty of not so good research, but that this area needs further attention. Keonig's final word sums up what I felt on completing this book. "Thus, both a solid research base and common sense argue that the religious and spiritual beliefs of patients are linked in one way or another to their health and well-being. Learning to respect the power of these beliefs and utilize them to speed the patient's healing and recovery of wholeness…should be a priority for modern medicine and health care."

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ANGELA O'DONNELL

HATING FRANK

THE WOMEN

A Novel

By T. C. Boyle
Viking. 464p $27.95
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T. C. Boyle's big, brilliant novel *The Women* tells the story of a larger-than-life man's larger-than-life loves. This account of the architect Frank Lloyd Wright's relationships with the women who devoted themselves to him in the course of his long life is the second novel in two years to depict Wright's love affairs. Nancy Horan's *Loving Frank* (2007) focused on the most sensational of his alliances, his five-year adulterous liaison with Martha "Mamah" Borthwick Cheney, which ended tragically in her brutal murder at the hands of a servant at Taliesin, the almost mythic rural retreat Wright built for her in Wisconsin.

Boyle's novel is much more ambitious, as it attempts to chronicle four complex relationships with four radically different women: Catherine "Kitty" Tobin Wright, his wife of 20 years and mother to his six children, whom he leaves for Mamah Cheney; Mamah herself, a gifted intellectual inspired by the ideals of feminism and free love to leave her own marriage; Maude Miriam Noel, Wright's second wife, a sculptor and Southern dilettante who is as vain as she is beautiful and cruel; and Olgivanna Lazovich Milanoff, the young Montenegrin dancer, his third wife, to whom he remains married until his death in 1959. These women have one thing in common: an unaccountable love for a singularly unlovable man. The unresolved mystery at the heart of this novel—a book that reads more like a tell-all memoir than a work of

fiction—is why they fall so utterly, insanely and obsessively in love with a man the reader cannot stand.

To further emphasize Wright's magnetism, Boyle assembles a galaxy of characters who are irresistibly drawn into his orbit. Among these is the novel's fictional narrator, Tadashi Sato, a young Japanese architecture student apprenticed to Wright (whom he refers to deferentially as "Wrieto-San"). Along with a number of other apprentices, Tadashi lives at Taliesin from 1932 until 1941 as part of Wright's household until the bombing of Pearl Harbor leads to his arrest and eventual internment in a prison camp in Northern California. Tadashi's removal from Wright's presence, rather than his imprisonment, causes him the deepest grief: "I didn't care what became of me. I'd lost Taliesin. Lost Wrieto-San." His devotion to his master is unwavering despite the fact that Wright does some rather despicable things to Tadashi, including breaking up his love affair with Daisy, one of the other architecture students, because he objects to miscegenation. In another instance, Wright the teetotaler unjustly accuses the ordinarily ascetic Tadashi of being an alcoholic because he takes some of the new apprentices to the local watering hole one night to celebrate their arrival.

Not only is Wright portrayed as a racist; he is a Puritan, and a hypocritical one at that, given the fact that he often takes the moral high ground even as he is violating his marriage vows and living openly as an adulterer. What to do with such a man? "Love him," seems to be the answer. And love him they do—both men and women alike.

Yet their devotion does not prevent Tadashi or Wright's wives and mistresses from acknowledging his faults. One of the most engaging aspects of the narrative is Tadashi's tendency to editorialize, particularly in his introductions to each of the novel's three parts and in his many footnotes. The latter sometimes serve as a species of savage marginalia in which he passes judgment on Wrieto-San, while at other times they bring to the foreground the minute and multitudinous ironies-within-ironies that characterize Wright's life.

One arresting instance of this occurs in Part I as the narrator recounts, in thrilling detail, the fire that destroys Taliesin for the second time. Wright grieves as his magnificent home burns, a searing reminder of the first fire set years ago by the servant who killed Mamah and her children. The narrator questions whether the vengeful "God of Isaiah" was "striking at him again for his hubris, his too-perfect creation, the spark that made him godlike himself." Within this grand, tragic context, the narrator poses an almost comical question in a parenthetical remark embedded in a footnote some pages later: "(And what is it

with this man and fire?)" Indeed, the narrator nudges us, Wright's life is haunted by conflagration, both literal and figurative, some deliberately set by Wrieto-San himself. The Promethean demigod is deflated even as the narrator looks on admiringly—and sympathetically.

This is a nervy thing for Boyle to do. The reader could easily be carried along on the sheer momentum of his exuberant storytelling as he recounts Catherine's stalwart opposition, Mamah's renunciation of respectability, Miriam's mad obsession and Olgivanna's poignant desire for security and stasis, but Boyle refuses to allow it. Tadashi's interpolations detach and distance us from the story's events in much the same way as the predatory press tantalized Wright's contemporaries with reports of his marital upheavals and yet kept them at a voyeur's safe remove. More is strangely less, and Wright remains a riddle.

ON THE WEB
Michael Paul Gallagher, S.J., on nourishing the religious imagination.
americamagazine.org/podcast

Wright—and to a certain extent, his greatest creation, Taliesin—is the Rorschach test through which we come to understand each woman and what she sees in this troubled—and troubling—man. Yet, he serves as no passive object of contemplation. Rather, he figures as a potent force, a maker who relentlessly reshapes reality to suit his mastering vision, and his women figure among his works of art as surely as his buildings. As Catherine muses, "Everything was his. He'd put his stamp on inanimate things and people alike." Though the novel may be titled *The Women*, let the reader make no mistake: it's all about Frank.

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LETTERS

New Wineskins

Thank you for "Exceptional Pastoring," by Mary M. Foley (3/9). My parish priest is running three parishes spread over two towns, the parish priest next door is running two other parishes in two other towns—and so it goes. Here in England, we have far fewer priests than in the United States (I am often amazed at the number of Sunday Masses and priests in some U.S. parishes), and we are coming to realize that we need much more lay involvement—and the majority of involved lay people are women.

We need more training for pastoral leadership and more acceptance of women "up at the front" if we expect the church not only to survive but to grow and to flourish.

EILEEN SAGAR
Burnley, U.K.

Role Models

In "Exceptional Pastoring," Mary M. Foley is correct in saying "We are not the givers of religious vocations, nor can we choose what gifts will be given." But it is important to remember that a call to a religious vocation is not often a direct "call" (as St. Francis or St. Paul were called), but rather is mediated by the surrounding community and the broader culture. Therefore, it is not only important for a pastor (or anyone in pastoral leadership) to talk about and encourage vocations, but also to recognize how their milieu shapes the understanding of vocation in those being called.

If we want to encourage young men to enter the priesthood, we have to give some thought as to whether the model of lay pastoral leadership might not move young men (and women) in another direction. This is not an objection to lay pastoral leadership; when done well, it is a great gift to the church.

But it is a concern that needs to be acknowledged and addressed by those in pastoral leadership roles.

DAVID CRUZ-URIBE, S.F.O.
West Hartford, Conn.

Denial

Re Mary M. Foley's reflections on women in parish leadership: We have been talking about alternative forms of parish leadership for over 20 years, but bishops, priests and laity are all still sailing down that river in Egypt.

I once had a conversation with a group of churchwomen gathered to facilitate a parish task. "If this were really important," one sniffed, "Father would be here." "Father's not here," I responded, "because he trusts that we can get the job done."

This is a novel idea to most bishops, priests and parishioners, so let's stop wasting trees on articles about things that are not happening. Maybe in 20 more years, the Catholic community will be desperate enough to consider changing.

KRISTEEN BRUUN
North Richland Hills, Tex.

Fresh Air

In 90 years of life on this good earth, I have rarely written a letter to the editor. However, the recent article by Mary M. Foley caught my attention.

It was beautifully articulated and expressed, far beyond my ability to do so, my feelings about the potential of women in parish leadership. This is an issue that has long been neglected in official Catholic media. It is a welcome breath of fresh air.

JOHN R. FRIANT
Berryville, Va.

Fellow Traveler

I loved Karen Sue Smith's "The World by Chair" (3/2). It really resonated with my experience. I have been working on putting together a trip to Australia, returning via South Africa, and have been using a Web site where one can plot out a trip on a map and pick the flights. Great fun. I've gone around the

world many times now...and never left my desk!

SUZANNE ELSESSER
Larchmont, N.Y.

Strong-Arm Tactics

I agree with Thomas Massaro, S.J., about the need for "free and fair collective bargaining" in the workplace ("More Perfect Unions," 3/9). But I fail to see how denying workers access to secret balloting helps achieve that goal. By all means, we should prevent unfair practices by employers, but we must also prevent unfair practices by union organizers.

Allowing strong-arm tactics by union organizers to secure "majority sign-up" after denying workers a right to a secret ballot will not enhance workers' rights. What's next, "majority sign-up" in our national elections?

BILL LATTA
Napoleon, Ohio

Faith Formation

One issue in Daniel P. Sulmasy's report on the unraveling of Catholic health care in New York ("Then There Was One," 3/16) that I would like to underscore is the dire need for substantial formation programs for Catholic health care leaders. I have seen poorly formed leaders selected for their competence, and yes, I have seen that competence result in better bottom lines. But I have also observed the moral and ethical limitations of some such leaders and have been appalled that Catholic health care boards would make such a tradeoff.

Is it any more appropriate to allow a supremely competent but poorly formed leader to head a Catholic health care institution than it would be to allow an unformed leader to

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head any other Catholic mission? Would we select an unformed leader as the president of Notre Dame, or allow an unformed leader to preside at Mass?

A. CRAIG EDDY, M.D.
Missoula, Mont.

An Ailing Industry

Re Daniel P. Sulmasy's "Then There Was One" (3/16): It is indeed sad that the Catholic health care tradition of delivering witness to the value of life must come to an end because of the fiscal realities and market disincentives that have come to bear on what has now become more of a business than a ministry. Perhaps it is time to shake the dust from our feet at these ventures and place our energies and resources where they may be employed to proclaim Gospel values more effectively.

DAN CALLAHAN, S.A.
Toronto, Ont.

Correction: The cartoon in the 3/16/09 issue was incorrectly credited. The cartoon was by Dave London.

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.

Made Perfect

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (B), MARCH 29, 2009

Readings: Jer 31:31-34; Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15; Heb 5:7-9; Jn 12:20-33

"He learned obedience from what he suffered" (Heb 5:8)

There is a troublesome assertion in today's second reading: "Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered." This verse conjures up an image of God as a disgruntled parent, who inflicts punishment on a disobedient child to teach the wayward one a lesson. Such an explanation for Jesus' Passion is highly problematic, both theologically and pastorally. What was it that Jesus needed to learn? What needed to be "made perfect" in him? Does Jesus then treat us this way, who are called to "obey him" (Heb 5:9)?

The notion of obedience being learned through the imposition of suffering can be misused by persons in authority as justification for abusive behavior toward those who depend on them. In homes where there is domestic abuse, husbands beat their wives to teach them obedience and submission. Some parents use physical punishment to teach their children to respect their authority; there is an ugly history of slave-owners doing the same. Surely this is not how we should understand today's readings.

It is important to understand the context of this passage from Hebrews, both within the whole of the document, and in the broader biblical and liturgical context. Today's second reading is part of an elaborate exposition on Jesus' high priesthood. The author knows that the earthly Jesus was not a priest (Heb 7:14); he speaks metaphorically, arguing that Jesus' suffering and death have the saving effects that the temple sacrifices had, which were offered by the high priest. The author asserts that Jesus' sacrifice put an end to all need for further sacrifices (7:27). In the section we hear in today's reading, the emphasis is that in Jesus we have a "high priest" able to sympathize with us in every way.

Jesus is not removed from humanity in some inaccessible sacred sphere; he experienced everything that we do, except sin. The author of Hebrews is saying that the earthly Jesus, like all human beings, grew in consciousness of what his mission was and learned through experience the full meaning of what it is to be obedient to God. In v. 9, the verb *teleiotheis*, "made perfect," does not refer to moral perfection, but has at its root a sense of "completeness," "wholeness." Thus, it is Jesus' process of coming to a full understanding of his mission and its cost to him that the author speaks of as Jesus' becoming "perfected."

The whole purpose of this exposition in Hebrews is to exhort the hearers to imitate Jesus' attitude toward God. As this Christian community experiences suffering, its members are directed to do as Jesus did. First, they should pour out their hearts to God, as Jesus was shown in the Synoptic Gospels to have done in Gethsemane. Similarly, the psalms of lament, like today's responsorial psalm, supply a pattern. No human being, including Jesus, wants to suffer and die, and God hears such pleas. At the same time, Jesus approaches God with "reverence," *eulabeia* (Heb 5:7), that is, awe before the power of God. He knows that God hears him, and at the same time he hears God and knows the cost of being obedient to the divine mission of extending salvific love to all. This is what the author of Hebrews wants us to emulate: obedience as faithfulness to God's desire for life to the full for all, and a willingness to embrace the suffering the mission entails. We can learn this kind of obedience by imitating ("obeying") Jesus (Heb 5:9).

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- In what ways has something you have suffered brought love to greater fullness in you?
- How does it affect our treatment of one another if we understand obedience as faithfulness to the demands of a love relationship?
- What does Jeremiah's image of the demands of love being written on the heart say to you?

ART: TAD DUNNE

This paradox is expressed with another image in today's Gospel: that of a grain of wheat that is planted and dies, so as to produce much fruit. Death, in this metaphor, is not the end of life, but a transformation by which one is "made perfect," that is, reaches the full flowering of God's design. God is not intent on teaching us obedience by imposing suffering, but leads us to follow Jesus, trusting that God accompanies us and strengthens us through experiences of suffering and death, which bring the full flourishing of life.

BARBARA E. REID

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