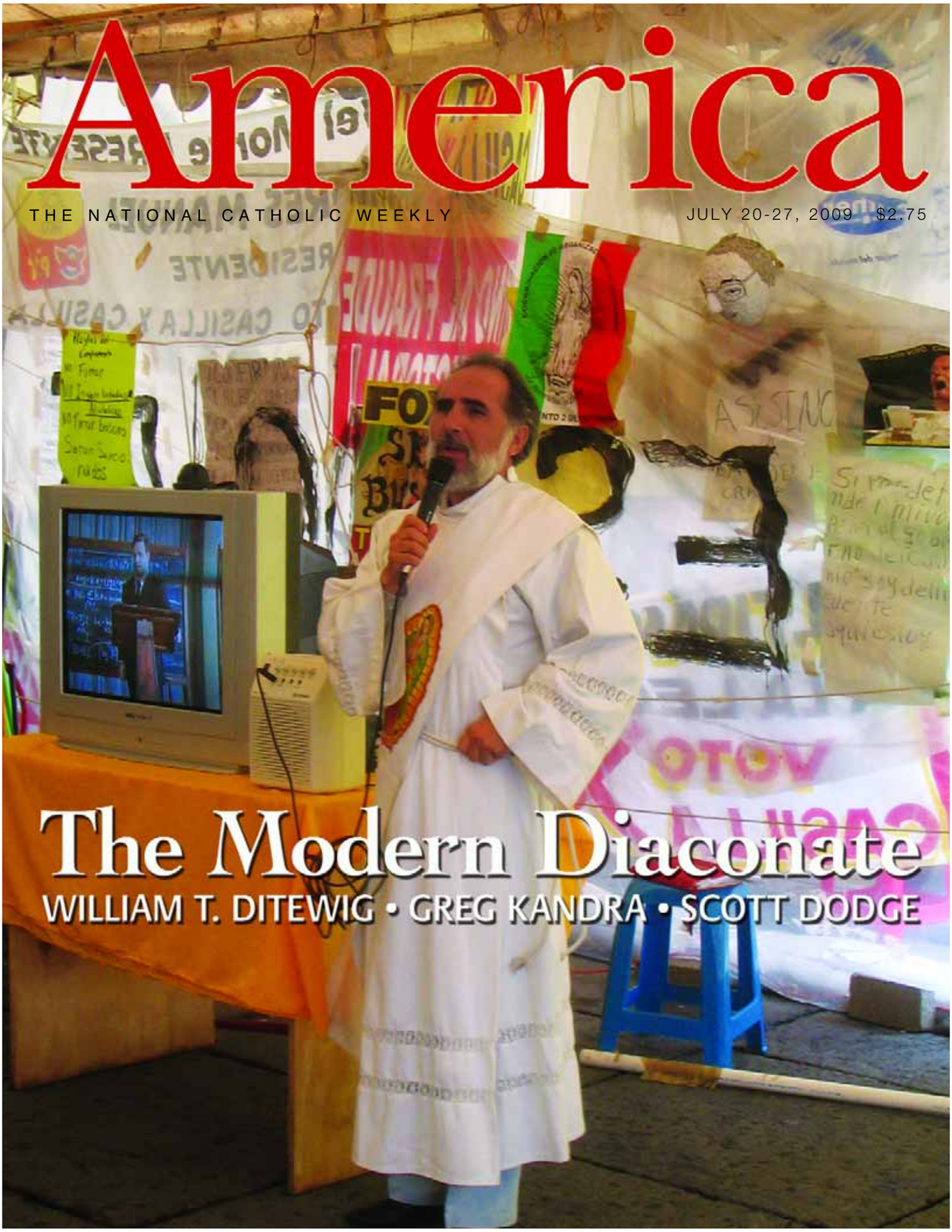

America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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The Modern Diaconate

WILLIAM T. DITEWIG • GREG KANDRA • SCOTT DODGE

OF MANY THINGS

A mere 95 years ago this summer, miscalculation and madness brought forth the War to End All Wars, the first of the 20th century's twin cataclysms and humankind's gruesome introduction to total warfare on a global scale. In the opinion of much of Europe's intelligentsia at the time, it was not supposed to have happened. As Barbara Tuchman pointed out in *The Guns of August*, her masterly account of the initial months of World War I (if you are still looking for a good beach read, pick up this 1962 Pulitzer-winner), enlightenment values and liberal economics, it was thought, had rendered war passé, irrational, even impossible. During the years just before the war, the runaway international bestseller, translated into 11 languages, had been Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*, which, according to Tuchman, "'proved' that in the present financial and economic interdependence of nations, the victor would suffer equally with the vanquished, therefore war had become unprofitable; therefore, no nation would be so foolish as to start one."

The problem with Angell's argument was that its premise, that the decision whether to wage war is mainly a rational political or economic choice, was false. Still, a descendant of this argument can be found today among those pushing the benefits of globalization. A world in which we buy DVD players composed of parts assembled from a dozen or more countries and supported by customer service agents tens of thousands of miles from our living rooms, it is thought, will produce a safer world, because any act of aggression would injure the aggressor as much as it might injure the victim.

Yet while politics and economics are undoubtedly key elements in all warmaking, the horrendous reality of war antedates the nation-state and precedes politics and economics in all but their most primordial historical forms. This suggests that there is something almost innate in our drive to kill and conquer, which likely has more to do with original sin than it does with entangled alliances, or Lenin's theory of imperialism, or McKinley's manifest destiny, or Bush's preventive war.

If that is the case, if the sin of Adam and Eve helps explain why Cain killed Abel and why the Kaiser marched on Paris, then this much is also true: war can never be understood as a rational exercise, for sin, original or otherwise, is by definition irrational, separating us as it does from God, the source and summit of life itself, without whom there is no reason, no freedom, no hope. Peace, therefore, requires far more than justice. It requires the radical conversion of sinful human hearts, our subsequent forgiveness of others' sins, even the most barbarous, and the ultimate reconciliation of all humanity through the grace of God.

Tuchman reminds us that after the First Battle of the Marne in early September 1914, a bloody stalemate ensued and "the nations were caught in a trap from which there was, and has been, no escape." In my Good Friday moments, when the world as it is seems so hopelessly far from what it is meant to be; when, as Winston Churchill wrote of the summer of 1914, "the terrible ifs accumulate," I sometimes wonder whether escape is even possible.

An Easter faith tells me that it is, reminds me that while human beings may be deprived by virtue of original sin, we are not depraved, that there is much in humanity that is noble and true and good. In my Easter moments, I hope that the essential goodness of humanity may yet prevail, that my brothers' sons, unlike their great-grandfather, who fought in the inaptly named Great War, may know the true peace that the Prince of Peace wills for us all.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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Cover: Deacon Álvaro Sierra preaches in a tent in a protest camp set up in Mexico City's central plaza in 2006. Photo: CNS/Jason Lange

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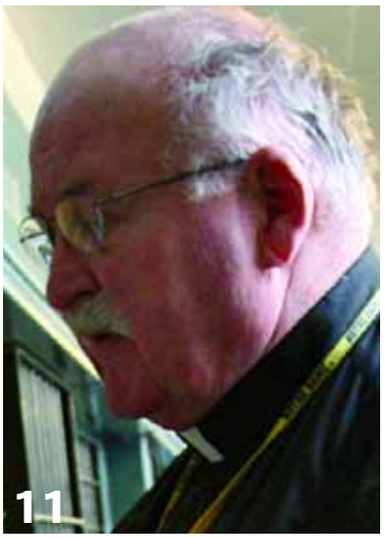

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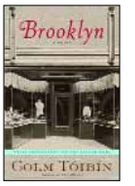


Healthier Already

Whatever the shape of the final health care reform bill, which is expected to be worked out by both houses of Congress and sent to the president this fall, two measures have already been achieved by the Obama administration that will significantly improve the nation's health. The first concerns insurance for children in low-income families; the second addresses smoking, particularly tobacco products and ads designed to attract teens.

President Obama signed an extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in February, after months of stalling by the Bush administration. The extension enables states to cover the health and dentistry needs of more than four million children by 2013. The program assists children whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford private insurance. The extension also allows states to cover legal immigrants, particularly pregnant women and children under age 21. Previous policy barred legal immigrants from receiving both Medicaid and S-chip until they had lived in the United States for at least five years.

More than 400,000 Americans die each year from tobacco-related products. In June, Mr. Obama signed the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which gives the Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate nicotine levels in tobacco, to ban candy and fruit flavorings, to prevent cigarette advertising aimed toward children and teens and to bar ads near schools and playgrounds.

The two bills advance major goals of health care reform: expanded coverage and preventive medicine; they are also "deficit neutral" and, in the second case, ingeniously just: The costs of the S-chip expansion are to be offset by an increase in the tobacco tax.

Pope and President

The recent meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and President Barack Obama had all the markings of an encounter between two well-acquainted statesmen; it was almost hard to believe that this was their first face-to-face engagement. Some of their unexpected familiarity is due to the diligent work of Vatican diplomats, who in recent years have done much behind the scenes to engage American officials and to establish dialogue between American public figures and their Vatican counterparts.

The relationship between pope and president has not always been thus. Woodrow Wilson was the first president to meet a pope, Benedict XV, after the close of World War I in 1919. Four decades would pass before another such meeting, when Dwight D. Eisenhower met John XXIII at the Vatican in 1959. All told, popes and presidents have only met a total of 26 times; 17 of those meetings took place in the Vatican, and the vast majority during the long reign of John Paul II.

The political relationship between the United States and the Holy See has until recent years been an uneasy one. Formal diplomatic relations have existed for only a quarter-century, and there was no official contact at all from 1870 (the loss of the Papal States) until 1939, when Franklin Roosevelt made Myron Taylor his personal representative to the Vatican. For that reason, the sight of an American president happily and respectfully greeting the pope is an occasion for celebration on more than one level.

Mere Pious Legend?

"This seems to confirm the unanimous and uncontested tradition that they are the mortal remains of the Apostle Paul," said Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of July. The pope was referring to findings of the first-ever scientific tests on a recently unearthed sarcophagus, which was located under the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, traditionally considered the final resting place of the saint. Atop the tomb, which dates from at least A.D. 390, was a marble slab inscribed with the words "Paul Apostle Martyr" in Latin. Inside the sarcophagus, in addition to the bone fragments, were grains of incense and a piece of purple linen with gold ornamentation.

Skeptics sometimes scoff at "traditional" sites associated with the lives of the saints and the life of Christ, dismissing them as "pious legends." About some relics and artifacts there will always be uncertainty. Yet modern archeological tools (like carbon-dating) have shown that many such traditions may have some basis in fact. In the 1950s, for example, excavations under the Basilica of St. Peter uncovered the remains of a man in his 60s or 70s near a shrine dating from the first or second century. Scripture scholars also note that members of Jesus' extended family would have likely remained in Galilee after his earthly ministry and could have easily directed early pilgrims to important sites in Jesus' life. The followers of Christ, and admirers of the saints, would have revered such places and would have naturally passed on their locations to later generations. Pious legends, then, are sometimes more than just pious, and more than simply legendary.

EDITORIAL

For the Common Good

Catholics may wonder sometimes about the pertinence of Catholic social teaching to our fast-changing public life. Yet President Obama talked freely a several weeks ago with Catholic journalists about the formative influence of Catholic social teaching on his moral development, citing it particularly as "a moral compass" on matters of distribution (see Signs of the Times). At the center of that teaching is the notion of the common good, which Blessed John XXIII was the first to define as the full human development of every person. Now Pope Benedict XVI, in his first social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (*On Human Development in Charity and Truth*), released on July 7, has written: "To take a stand for the common good" involves care for and participation in "that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the *polis*..." (No. 7).

In the United States today, however, our institutional arrangements seem to be failing the common good, surrendering to individual, partisan and class interests. On Capitol Hill, in state houses and in board rooms across the country all the pointers read: decline—failure to move ahead because we cannot come together. At a time that calls for shared sacrifice and an increased measure of fairness, too many leaders are pursuing their own interests to the detriment of the common good.

In New York State, a split in the Senate, precipitated by Republicans and a single grand-standing Democratic renegade, has deadlocked state government, causing scores of bills to expire for lack of action. In California, the voters rejected Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed plan to reduce the state's $41 billion deficit by $21 billion; and the Legislature, perpetuating decades of dysfunction, is incapable of passing a budget. As of this month, California is paying its vendors in i.o.u.'s.

On Capitol Hill, where there is some appearance of action, legislation is so muddied by deals for special interests that observers question whether any of the legislation—whether on banking reform, health care or climate change—will result in any significant change. In their flight from serious regulation, banking interests are resisting the Obama administration's latest proposal for a new agency to protect consumers in the financial markets. Coal, power and agricultural interests obtained special provisions in the Cap-and-Trade energy bill. So many pollution licenses have been given away in advance, it is reported, that as few as 10 percent of licenses remain to be openly traded. As one columnist has written, "political pragmatism" is succeeding in assembling majorities in favor of bills that will pass the test of "policy pragmatism"—that is, policies that will work.

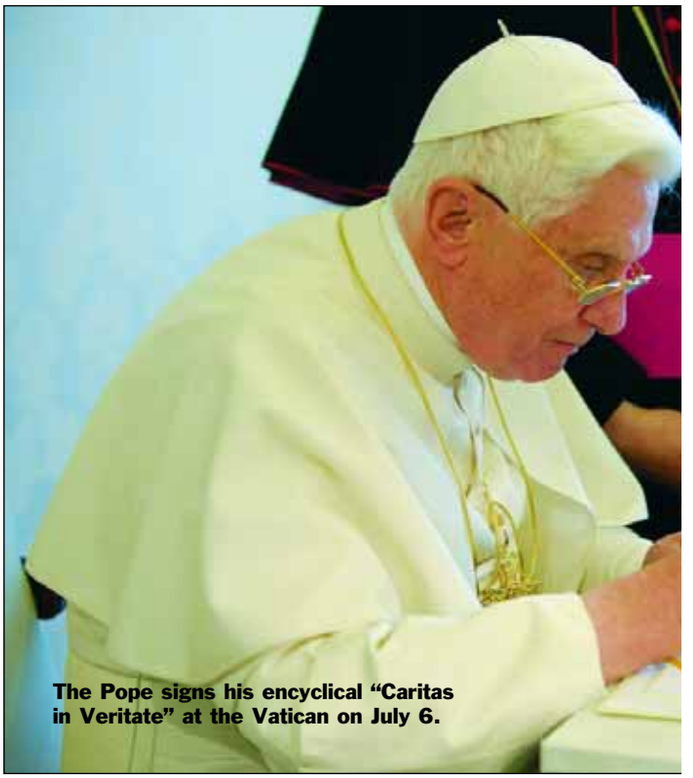
The Me Decade of the 1970s has not ended. Even the Great Recession has not killed it. Though polls show that taxpayers are willing to pay more to provide universal coverage in health care or to reduce global warming, when they face actual proposals to raise taxes to balance budgets or solve fundamental problems, they and their lawmakers vote no. As in the recent past, the wealthy are the most resistant. Bankers rushed to pay back their government loans so that government could not set limits on executive compensation intended to retain the too-smart-for-the-world's-good whiz kids who brought us the global economic crisis.

The political system, too, is corrupted in the profound sense that it not only cannot resist special interests but allows itself to be ruled by them. In hearings, Congressmen and Senators hold their theaters of crisis, and play their roles as righteous defenders of the underdog. They scold automakers for flying to Washington on private jets and question loan executives for taking fat bonuses as their companies were about to tank. But despite the change of administrations, one-party control of Congress and the world economic crisis, it is business as usual. Legislation is written to please the interests, while lawmakers "spin" to the voters that they are making fundamental reforms. Advocates for the common good, like proponents of single-payer health care, are not given a serious hearing. Only special interests need apply.

In his new encyclical, Pope Benedict reminds us of the function and purpose of our public and social institutions. "To desire the common good," he writes, "and strive for it is a requirement of justice and charity..... The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them" (No. 8). Today all Americans, but especially those in elected and appointed office and those in key positions in the private sector, need to ask themselves how effective their decisions are in bringing about the integral human development of every person that is the common good.

THE VATICAN

New Encyclical Seeks New Way of Doing Business


The Pope signs his encyclical "Caritas in Veritate" at the Vatican on July 6.

Ethical values are needed to overcome the current global economic crisis as well as to eradicate hunger and promote the development of all the world's peoples, Pope Benedict XVI said in his new encyclical. The document, *Caritas in Veritate* (*On Human Development in Charity in Truth*) was released at the Vatican on July 7.

The truth that God is the creator of human life, that every life is sacred, that the earth was given to humanity to use and protect and that God has a plan for each person must be respected in development programs and in economic recovery efforts if they are to have real and lasting benefits, the pope said. Charity, or love, is not an option for Christians, he added, and "practicing charity in truth helps people understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful, but essential for building a good society and for true integral development."

In addressing the global economic crisis and the enduring poverty of the world's poorest countries, he said, "the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity." The global dimension of the financial crisis is an expression of the moral failure of greedy financiers and investors, of the lack of oversight by national governments and of a lack of understanding that the global economy requires internationally recognized global control, the pope said.

United Nations reform. Pope Benedict stressed that the revitalization of the United Nations system is essential if the world is to recover successfully from the current economic crisis and find peaceful means of resolving conflicts. "In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the United Nations organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth," the pope wrote. "To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority," he said.

Development aid. That the world's richest nations, the pope wrote, would scale back their development aid while focusing on their own economic recoveries overlooks the long-term, practical economic benefits of solidarity with the world's poor as well as the moral obligation to help them. "In the search for solutions to the current economic crisis, development aid for poor countries must be considered a valid means of creating wealth for all," the pope said. The economic growth of poorer countries and their citizens' demands for consumer goods actually benefit producers in the world's wealthier nations. The pope said that "more economically developed nations should do all they can to allocate larger portions of their gross domestic product to development aid," respecting the commitments they made to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which aim at significantly reducing global poverty rates by 2015.

Expansive pro-life agenda. Pope Benedict said that being pro-life means being pro-development, especially given the connection between poverty and infant mortality, and that the only way to promote the true development of people is to promote a culture in which every human life is welcomed and valued, arguing that food and water are "universal rights of all human beings without distinction or discrimination" and form a part of the basic right to life. "The acceptance

of life strengthens moral fiber and makes people capable of mutual help," he said.

Development programs and offers of aid that encourage coercive or unethical population-control methods or that promote abortion do not have the good of people at heart and limit the recipients' motivation to become actors in their own development and progress, the pope said. In addition, an anti-life mentality in the world's richest countries is partly responsible for a lack of concern for the poor. "How can we be surprised by the indifference shown toward situations of human degradation when such indifference extends even to our attitude toward what is and is not human?" the pope asked. "While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human."

Recognizing all stakeholders. Pope Benedict also reemphasized church teaching that making money and being wealthy are not in themselves sinful, but that the way in which money is made and the way it is spent can be occasions of sin. The encyclical in particular condemned corruption, the exploitation of workers, the destruction of the environment, the continuing practice of wealthy nations imposing such high tariffs on imports that they shut poor countries out of the international marketplace and, especially, an "excessive zeal" for enforcing patents, especially on medications that could save the lives of thousands of poor people if they were available at a reasonable cost.

The document called for "a profoundly new way of understanding business," which recognizes that investors are not a company's only stakeholders, no matter how the business is structured and financed. Employees, those who make the products, people who live in the communities where companies are based, where their products originate and where their products are sold, all have a stake in a business, the pope said. He also wrote that investing always has a moral dimension. "What should be avoided is a speculative use of financial resources that yields to the temptation of seeking only short-term profit without regard for the long-term sustainability of the enterprise, its benefit to the real economy and attention to the advancement—in suitable and appropriate ways—of further economic initiatives in countries in need of development," he said.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

President Meets With Religious Press

In a wide-ranging interview with Catholic editors and religion reporters in advance of his July 10 meeting with Pope Benedict XVI, President Obama expressed his admiration for Catholic social teaching and the quality of its social action.

Mr. Obama voiced particular gratitude to the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and the Catholic parishes of southside Chicago, where he first worked as a community organizer in the 1980s. "Cardinal Bernardin was strongly pro-life," the president said, "never shrank from speaking about that issue, but was very consistent in talking about a seamless garment and a range of issues that were part and parcel of what he considered to be pro-life, that meant he was concerned about poverty, he was concerned with how children were treated, he was concerned about the death penalty, he was concerned about foreign policy."

The Catholic social tradition, President Obama added, "still impresses me," and it can be a powerful force still in American society. Establishing a relationship with the bishops, the president commented, "is important to me because I have very fond memories of Cardinal Bernardin.... And so I know the potential that the bishops have to speak out forcefully on issues of social justice."

President Obama was to meet with Pope Benedict following a meeting of G-8 leaders in L'Aquila, Italy, whose

agenda was to include examining the impact of the world economic crisis on the poor. Promoting basic security for all at home and abroad, he said, should be a goal of the eight leading industrial countries. "I want to talk to the Holy Father about some core reforms not just overseas, but here in this country that assure basic security for individuals, the middle class as well as the poor."

He continued, "I believe capitalism is the most effective means of generating wealth," but it does not insure economic protection for all. By contrast, in the president's estimation, "the Catholic Church has always been a powerful moral compass on questions of distribution and how we make sure that opportunities are extended to everybody. . . . And we want to build a society that is not only wealthy in the aggregate, but is also just."

At L'Aquila, the president hoped the G-8 would review the commitments made in London at the G-20 summit last April. The United States has committed $100 billion to the I.M.F. to cushion the effects of the global economic recession on the world's poor. The president also plans to double the U.S. contribution to world food security and direct U.S. development aid to poor countries toward agricultural development for the sake of food self-sufficiency. He also intends to press other wealthy nations for matching contributions to international food security as well.

President Obama meets with the religious press on July 2.

Honduran President Urged Not to Return

Deposed Honduran President Manuel Zelaya tried to return home on July 5, but was prevented from landing by soldiers who blocked the runway at Tegucigalpa's airport. A day earlier, in a nationwide address Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa urged Zelaya not to return to Honduras. "We think that a return to the country at this time could unleash a bloodbath in the country," Cardinal Rodríguez said. "To this day, no Honduran has died. Please think, because afterward it will be too late." Honduras's new government has charged Zelaya with 18 criminal acts, including treason and failing to implement more than 80 laws approved by Congress since he took office in 2006. Zelaya was ousted in the early hours of June 28 when Honduran soldiers—acting on orders of the National Congress—shot up his house and took the pajama-clad president to the airport, where he was flown on a military plane to Costa Rica.

U.S. Bishops Revisit Covenant Document

The "ambiguities" in a seven-year-old document from Catholic and Jewish dialogue partners are continuing to cause confusion, two committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in June. The U.S.C.C.B. said the Catholic section of a 2002 document, *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, written by participants in an ongoing dialogue between the National Council of Synagogues and the U.S.C.C.B., "contains some statements that are insufficiently precise and potentially misleading." In a note issued during the bishops' spring meeting, the committees said, "*Reflections on Covenant and Mission* should not be taken as an authoritative presentation of the teaching of the Catholic Church." By stating that the Jewish people's "witness to the kingdom...must not be curtailed by seeking the conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity," the document "could lead some to conclude mistakenly that Jews have an obligation not to become Christian and that the church has a corresponding obligation not to baptize Jews," the committee wrote.

The heads of several major U.S. Jewish organizations said the bishops' statement was a setback for Catholic-Jewish relations. "The whole basis of dialogue has had a major monkey wrench thrown into it," Rabbi Gary Greenebaum of the American Jewish Committee told The Los Angeles Times. "What it feels like to Jews is that this is a major breach of trust."

From CNS, staff and other sources.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR.

Blame Cheney?

In 2001 I served on President George W. Bush's senior White House staff. As a student of American government, it struck me as odd that several "assistants to the president" reported directly to Vice-President Dick Cheney, and odder still that no matter what the issue, lower-level Cheney staff weighed in on West Wing policymaking.

Odd, but what the Gettysburg College political scientist Shirley Anne Warshaw describes as the first-ever "White House staff fully integrated between the president's office and the vice president's office" did not strike me at the time as improper or nefarious.

But if Warshaw is even half-right, what I witnessed should have made me wince: a constitutionally suspect "co-presidency," with Bush as "the public face of the administration" and Cheney driving "economic, energy, and national security policy" and working "to expand the power of the presidency."

"Must read" is a book-seller's bark, but Warshaw's new book, *The Co-Presidency of Bush and Cheney* (Stanford Univ. Press), is a must-read for all, including morally self-aware, civic-minded Catholics of whatever partisan or ideological leanings. For it was, she argues, Cheney's "failed policy after failed policy" that "destroyed the presidency of George W. Bush."

Here is a sample of the evidence Warshaw musters for her co-presidency thesis:

- Cheney belittled Bush's qualifications except as (in Cheney's own words) "the guy who went out and put his name on the ballot."
- Cheney suffered Bush's religiously-rooted "compassionate conservatism" so long as it did not result in more federal support for the urban poor.
- Cheney deep-sixed "support for legislative action on faith-based initiatives, for fear that they would jeopardize political capital" for tax cuts. (Warshaw footnotes this example not to me but to her interview with Bush's first chief legislative liaison, Nick Calio.)
- Cheney let Rove, no fan of Cheney's, handle "compassion" and party politicking, uniting their two camps after 9/11 when the "war on terror" suddenly became both Cheney's number one policy issue and Rove's number one campaign issue.
- Cheney used his loyalists to control the "Bush" personnel selection process, which Bush "rubber-stamped" on cabinet secretaries, thousands of agency political appointments, senior and junior White House aides, and judicial appointments.
- On 9/11, Cheney, not Bush, ran the federal response from his East Wing bunker, giving the order to shoot down planes that might be cruising for population centers—a prelude to the "Cheney-dominated Department of Homeland Security" and Cheney's firm grip, into 2006, on Iraq war decision-making.
- Cheney drove "Bush's" broad claims of executive authority, using the White House Office of Legislative Affairs to decide which bills "were ready for the president to sign or veto."

Warshaw characterizes Cheney's co-presidency as a "shadow government": Cheney filled Bush's pervasive "policy vacuums" and "had the staff, the connections, and the institutional resources to move forward on his own policy agenda."

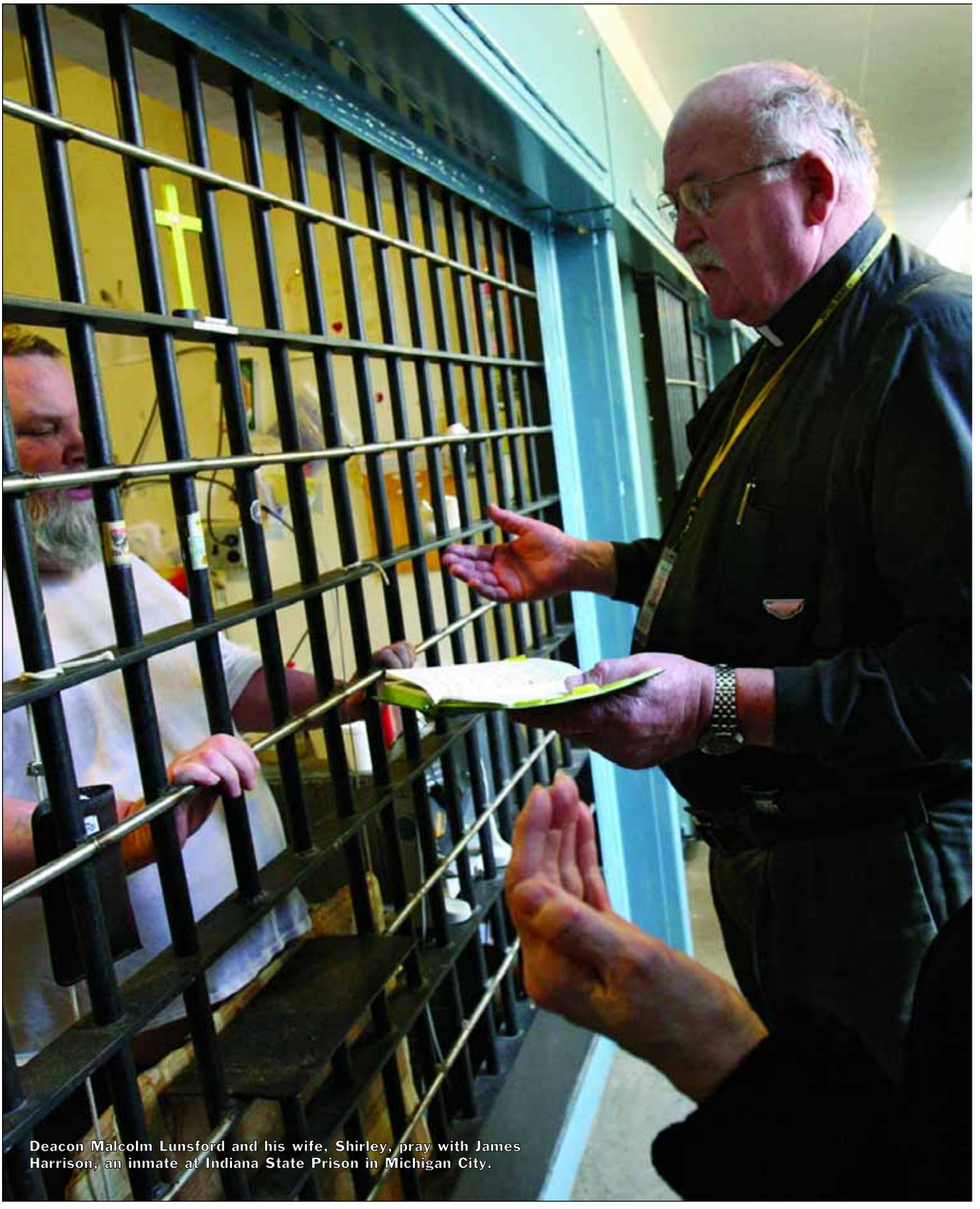
The one gaping hole in Warshaw's account is the Hurricane Katrina saga. The White House fiddled as New Orleans flooded, never fully activating nearby military bases or rushing other federal resources to the scene. The infamous Federal Emergency Management Agency, then led by Michael ("You're doing a heck of a job, Brownie!") Brown, reported to the ostensibly "Cheney-dominated" Homeland Security Department's Cheney-picked chiefs.

> Did Cheney's failed policies destroy the Bush presidency?

Yet Warshaw devotes only three pages to the Katrina saga and places Cheney nowhere near the criminally slow, morally callous Katrina decision-making action. Maybe other scholars, journalists or West Wing staff will learn that Cheney did weigh in here as usual, but the co-presidency thesis will have a huge question mark over its head unless and until they do.

Regardless, Warshaw is clear that the co-presidency is no permanent institutional fixture: "The Obama administration in particular will check the role of the vice president." It has; and, whatever one's feelings toward Joe Biden, he is surely no Dick Cheney.

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



Deacon Malcolm Lunsford and his wife, Shirley, pray with James Harrison, an inmate at Indiana State Prison in Michigan City.

PHOTO: CNS/KAREN CALLAWAY, NORTHWEST INDIANA CATHOLIC

THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS

Married and Ordained

WILLIAM T. DITEWIG

I had been a deacon for about a year and was on active duty in the U.S. Navy as executive officer of the Security Group Activity at Hanza, Okinawa, Japan. My family lived on Kadena Air Base, where I served at the Kadena chapel—the only deacon on Okinawa. One day I received a call from the senior Catholic chaplain, a friend. Laughing, he told me of a conversation he had just had with a young Air Force man reporting to Kadena for duty. Father Mike explained the chapel programs, and the young man said he had been to Mass there. Father described the pastoral staff, including the participation of a Navy Commander (me) as deacon. "Oh, was he the tall man who preached last Sunday?" the young man asked. "That's right," Father replied. The young man complimented my homily, but complained that he had seen me do something "just not right" after Mass: he saw me get into a car "with a woman and her children" and drive off! Father Mike explained that I was a married deacon, and that "the woman and her children" were my wife and our children. The young man said he knew deacons could be married, but that I should not have driven off with my family like that. Cognitively, he understood; affectively, he couldn't imagine a married cleric.

In another story of confusion, a woman visiting our parish once asked my wife, "When you die, will Bill become a real priest?"

DEACON WILLIAM T. DITEWIG, *ordained in 1990, was for five years executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for the Diaconate and the Secretariat for Evangelization. He is currently a professor of theology and director of graduate programs in theology at Saint Leo University, near Tampa, Fla.*

For more than a millennium, Latin Catholics saw an overwhelmingly celibate corps of ordained ministers, though for the last 40 years a new pattern has emerged that includes deacons who are both ordained and married. It is not surprising that confusion persists over the "double vocational sacramentality" of a married deacon.

Scholarship also lags behind current practice, with centuries of writing on the relationship of celibacy to ordained ministry, but nothing comparable on the relationship of matrimony and holy orders. One exception is Chapter Five of *Sacrament of Service: A Vision of the Permanent Diaconate Today*, by Patrick McCaslin and Michael G. Lawler (1986). This did not reverse the trend, but it does, I hope, offer food for conversation and understanding.

Just as the permanent diaconate is not only for celibates, neither is it a "married ministry," though currently most deacons are married. Rather, the permanent diaconate is a major order of ecclesial ministry open to married and to unmarried men.

While much theological and pastoral work is needed to help the church recognize the blessings of a married ordained ministry, work is also needed on the celibate permanent deacon, who lives a significantly different state of life than do transitional deacons and priests.

A Theology of Marriage and Orders

Until the renewal of a permanent diaconate, most discussion of "vocation" presented an either-or approach: a man could either marry or enter religious life/priesthood; a woman could either marry or enter religious life. Those were the vocational choices in the Latin Church.

The Second Vatican Council reminded the church that the source and foundation of Christian vocation is sacramental initiation itself. In his homily to the bishops at the end of the council, Pope Paul VI declared that underlying the council's work was the identity of the church as servant to the world. Vocations must be seen first through this lens: that all disciples are called to pour themselves out in service to others, following the kenotic example of Christ.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, reflecting conciliar teaching, describes the sacraments of matrimony and orders as having a mutuality of purpose. Both are "directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God" (No. 1534). The catechism goes on to describe both sacraments in terms of consecration: the ordained are consecrated "to feed the Church by the word and grace of God," and Christian spouses are consecrated "for the duties and dignity of their state" (No. 1535). This mutual approach to both sacraments builds on the consecration to discipleship celebrated through the most basic sacraments of vocation: the rites of Christian initiation. The sacraments of matrimony and orders add a leadership responsibility and specificity to the baptismal vocation—a particular responsibility for another person in a covenant marriage, and particular pastoral responsibilities toward a portion of the people of God.

The two sacraments share a common foundation. Both make unique demands on the time and resources of the married deacon's family. These demands must be carefully balanced, but the sacraments are relational, not conflictual. There is no point where the sacrament of matrimony is not graced by the sacrament of orders, and no point where the sacrament of orders is not graced by the sacrament of matrimony. At no point does one sacrament end and the other begin. The two sacraments become one in the person of the deacon and in the married state of life shared with spouse and family.

In marriage, spouses are called to give themselves totally to each other in love; this is nothing more or less than a kenotic *diakonia*: a self-emptying in service to another. The married deacon has a responsibility based on ordination to be a public and permanent ecclesial leader-in-service who not only speaks of such *diakonia* but who lives it within the sacramental covenant relationship of matrimony. Both sacraments call those who receive them to model Christ and, through their respective consecrations by the Spirit, to extend this model to the church and world at large. One could easily say that matrimony focuses on the domestic church while orders focuses on the broader community. But this would be far too facile a contrast, because both rites of initiation carry a leadership dimension within the family circle itself and to the wider world.

Priorities and Obligations

Deacons must be masters of balance. Married deacons must juggle the obligations of marriage, job and ministry. It became very popular in the early days of the renewal to speak of the "deacon's priorities": first in relationship to God, then to family, to job (because deacons are required to provide for themselves and their families by secular occupations) and to ecclesial ministry. Many people have come to see the list as impractical and theologically problematic. If approached incorrectly, the list tends to compartmentalize the Christian vocation of discipleship. Some people have used the list as a checklist, though its simplicity is a weakness: discipleship and the choices we must make are often messy.

A deacon must find balance between the obligations of matrimony and orders; he cannot routinely shirk one to attend to the other. It has been said that because matrimony precedes ordination, marriage has a fundamental priority over ordination. While I agree up to a point, I

think it cannot be an absolute priority. Ordination carries its own obligations, which one freely accepts when requesting it. Married couples travel the formation journey together so that both have a sense of what they are undertaking. My family and I have worked hard at balancing the demands of public ministry with family privacy. The fact that I am a public minister does not mean the whole family wants to be that.

Shortly after my ordination and assignment to a new parish, the pastor approached my wife, Diann, and asked what he could expect her role to be there. We struggled with how to respond. Neither of us wanted to disappoint the pastor. But Diann did not want to take on a public role; she did not feel called to do so, and she felt she needed to stay focused on our home and children. Other couples might have reached a different conclusion.

Diann used to love to sing in the church choir. As we were assigned to different parishes, however, something began to change. Choir directors sometimes assumed she would want to sing solos or be a cantor because "she's the deacon's wife."

One night I came home from work to find my youngest daughter very upset. A religion teacher had taken her to task for not knowing the names of the Twelve Apostles. "Why don't you know that? Your dad's a deacon!" My daughter didn't understand. "Dad, you're the deacon, not me!"

Then I took a job as associate principal and dean of students at a Catholic high school, where our oldest daughter was an incoming freshman. Not only did she have to make an adjustment from elementary school to high school, she had to do it with her dad as the school disciplinarian and a deacon.

Such pressures have made us careful to preserve and protect family privacy. But they have also helped me to understand other family dynamics better. When someone approaches me about a family situation, I appreciate not only the challenge, but the courage it takes to tell someone else about private matters. Being married with children and grandchildren gives me a solid grounding in something all families face: how to do what is good for each other. "Kenotic self-sacrifice" is not just a theological concept; it is, "Dad, please help that person out; we'll go to the movies later."

Concerns

Since this article focuses the discussions our church should be having on the relationship of matrimony and orders, I have set down four other issues that theologians, formation programs (for lay ecclesial ministers, deacons and priests) and anyone else interested in ministry in today's church would do well to consider.

1) More theological attention should be paid to the

relationship of the diaconate to the presbyterate and the episcopate. For half of the church's history, deacons were understood as "priests-in-training" (or as a theologian once quipped, "priests junior grade"). Recently, however, theologians have begun to articulate areas in which deacons are not "priestly." While there is a common foundation of ordination, each order is unique; the unique features of the diaconate need more theological and pastoral reflection.

2) Because deacons are not priests, the work of theologians and historians like Gary Macy and Phyllis Zagano must be considered vis-à-vis the ordination of women as deacons. The history of the church is clear: women have been ordained to diaconal ministry in the past and they could be again. The entire church would benefit from a full and open conversation on this issue.

ON THE WEB
To continue the conversation on deacons, visit americamagazine.org/deacons.cfm.

3) The practical impact of diaconal service on a deacon's family needs greater scrutiny. Yes, "only the husband is ordained." But that truism ignores an adequate theology of matrimony in which "the two become one flesh." Since a deacon's spouse and children are all affected by ordination, any suggestion that attention need be paid only to the deacon is problematic. Experience gained in diaconate formation has made clear that if the spouses are to grow together, they need to share the personal, spiritual and intellectual growth offered through formation. If they do not, divisions can occur and problems result. This insight is often ignored after ordination, however, as pastors and others begin their new relationship with the deacon.

4) Attention must also be paid to the "role" of the deacon's spouse. There is no singular role. Some wives share in a "couples' ministry" with their husbands, giving retreats, teaching, sharing hospital or prison ministry and so on. Other wives prefer to minister in areas different from their husbands. Still others have no interest in or availability for participation in public ministry. Each response must be respected by pastors and parishioners, as well as by deacons and spouses themselves. A deacon's spouse responds to God's call to discipleship in ways as diverse as those of any other Christian, and ought not be "pressured" into ministry. Conversely, some spouses, highly educated and experienced ministers, are suddenly relegated to the sidelines "because they are the deacon's wife."

With more than four decades, since Vatican II, of a diaconate open to both married and single men, it is time for all the baptized to engage in a healthy, lively conversation about the opportunities and challenges that the renewed diaconate offers the church. A

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A Deacon's Lessons

Seven things they don't teach you in formation

BY GREG KANDRA

I never realized just how hard a stone church floor can be until I found myself lying on one, face down, on a chilly May evening in 2007, just a few nights before my ordination. It was the rehearsal for the Big Event. As we practiced lying prostrate on the basilica floor for the Litany of the Saints, a thousand random thoughts ricocheted through my mind, but one jumped out and stays with me still: "Funny, but I didn't think the floor would be this cold."

Funny, but that was just the first unexpected surprise of my new life in the church. It would not be the last. It turns out there are a lot of things you do not learn about being an ordained clergyman until after the incense is cleared and the flowers have wilted and you are suddenly struck by two little words: "Now what?"

I remember feeling a little of that on my wedding day 23 years ago, as my new wife and I waved goodbye amid a blizzard of flower petals and birdseed, climbed into my Nissan Sentra and headed down the driveway toward our honeymoon. We had a map, but the direction our life together was about to take was unknowable and unpredictable.

Like married life, ordained life is something nobody can really prepare you for. And the most valuable lessons are often ones never mentioned in the classroom.

On May 19 I marked my two-year anniversary as a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Brooklyn. It's been an exhilarating, humbling, maddening, joyous and exhausting ride. Every now and then, deacon candidates ask me if I have any advice. "Pray," I tell them. "Pray hard."

But if you want something more concrete, here are a few brief observations from the last two years in the trenches and in the pulpit.

1. Priests are like snowflakes: no two are alike. Earlier this year, my bishop led a day of recollection for deacons and offered this insight, "You shouldn't look at cheese under a microscope because it will make you never want to eat cheese again." Then he explained that deacons are often exposed to the priesthood as if looking at it under a microscope.

It is not always pretty.

Deacons lie prostrate during an ordination ceremony in Indianapolis.

PHOTO: CNS/SEAN GALLAGHER, THE CRITERION

Well, like all of us, priests have quirks. Most I have met are enthusiastic cheerleaders for the diaconate and are happy to have the deacons' help. But there can be challenges. Some priests find deacons annoying and look at us the way W. C. Fields used to look at small dogs and children. Some prefer to work solo and roll their eyes when you show up in the sacristy. With others you need a GPS device to follow how they work around the altar: one gestures so broadly during Mass that when he opens his arms to pray, I have to duck; another priest can be as still as a stone. Some like just a little wine in the chalice, others more. Often the deacon has to think on his feet to anticipate what the priest is going to come up with next. It's like playing liturgical Ping-Pong.

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A priest I know once began a homily by saying, "I learned the other day that deacons are actually good for something…" which elicited a few chuckles from the congregation that quickly turned to groans. I told him afterward: "Don't mock the deacons. They'll turn on you."

2. To paraphrase Art Linkletter: parishioners say the darnedest things. Not long after ordination, I started having regular office hours in the rectory. One Saturday, I met with a woman to set up a baptism. I asked her if she and her husband had been married by a Catholic priest. She thought for a moment. "I don't think she was a priest," she began. I smiled. "If it was a 'she,'" I explained, "it wasn't a Catholic priest." Her face lit up and she smiled. "Oh then," she beamed proudly, "then she was a *nun*!" Um, no. Moving on, I later tried to explain to her that both godparents didn't have to be Catholic. "One has to be Catholic," I told her, "but the other can be Christian." She stared at me a long moment and asked, "What's the difference?"

I have had a front-row seat for the great milestones of life and have shared in the worries and wonders and hopes of the people in the pews.

The Communion line can also be an interesting place. I remember one Ash Wednesday when a man came up to receive, and as I was about to offer him the host, he shook his head. "Just a quick question," he whispered. "Will you guys be giving out ashes after Mass?"

3. The most important words in a deacon's vocabulary are also the shortest: "Yes" and "No." People who work in ministry cannot be all things to all people, and very few of us have mastered the art of bilocation, so it is probably a good idea to establish boundaries. Parishioners want to meet at all hours to discuss everything from rehearsing a wedding to arranging an annulment to figuring out how to handle a wayward teenage daughter.

On any given night, there are ministries to head, committees to form, grievances to hear. There are classes to teach and courses to take, and potluck suppers that will require you to sample at least some of the food. (I've discovered, like many in ministry, that albs can cover a multitude of sins, and that the most valuable part of my wardrobe is a black pair of pants with an elastic waistband.) The work can be taxing and exhausting.

My advice to anyone who wades into the world of parish work: set limits. Otherwise after going several months without a day off or a night free, you will start speaking in tongues.

4. Never, ever, under any circumstances, tell people in a homily that it might be spiritually enriching to pray for our enemies and then suggest a name. I did that once, mentioning Osama bin Laden, and the congregation actually gasped. I never heard the end of it.

5. Speaking of homilies, as with every kind of public speaking, you can say a lot by saying just a little. Listeners will overlook many faults and even shrug if the preacher proclaims some unspeakable heresy from the pulpit, as long as the speaker makes the point in seven minutes or less and it does not cause a bottleneck in the parking lot after Mass. (The exception, of course, is a homily that involves a known terrorist. See No. 4 above.)

6. Like a Boy Scout, a deacon needs to be prepared. During my first Holy Week as a deacon, the sacristan came to work with a cough on Tuesday. By Thursday every man in the rectory was coughing, wheezing, sneezing and clutching the walls to keep from fainting. The only person who was relatively healthy was—you guessed it—the deacon. Since I was

the only one able to stand in the pulpit without holding onto the sides for help, I ended up preaching at all the liturgies, including the trifecta: the Good Friday afternoon liturgy, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. My homiletic muscles got a full workout that week. I survived, but by Easter Monday I too was down for the count. I think I overdosed on incense.

On a related note, a seasoned deacon once offered me this advice: When it comes to preaching, be ready for anything. "I've had priests who told me while we were vesting that I would be preaching for them," he explained. "And once, a priest told me as we were about to process down the aisle that I was going to preach." His advice: better safe than sorry. Just be prepared.

7. But despite all that, no amount of preparation can prepare you for the miraculous. The first time I baptized a baby, I made a mental note to check out my eyeglass prescription, until I realized I was having trouble seeing because my eyes were blurred by my own tears. Ministerial life has been like that. I have been moved and inspired by the boundless joy of a couple on their wedding day, the giddiness of a mother and father dabbing the water from their baby's brow on the day of his baptism and the heartfelt handshake of a man who was grateful for something I mentioned in the pulpit. I have dried tears at funerals (sometimes my own) and smiled at small children who trot around the aisles during my homilies. I have been reminded, week after week, at wakes and weddings, at fundraisers and first Communions, that I am a part of something that is, like the mysteries of the rosary, joyous, luminous, sorrowful and glorious.

I have had a front-row seat for the great milestones of life and have shared in the worries and wonders and hopes of the people in the pews. I do not know most of their names, but they know me, and they know my wife, and they wave at us in the supermarket or stop us on the subway and go out of their way to say hello or how are you or thank you. I have been doing this for only two years, but already I've witnessed more miracles than I can count.

Probably the greatest of these is one that began on that cold stone floor in 2007. I still cannot explain it, but what is inexpressible is also inescapable. With ordination, the world shifts, and you are changed by a mystery that is uplifted and enlarged by something that you can only describe as grace. Barely a day goes by that I don't give prayerful thanks to God for inviting me into that mystery and sharing with me that grace.

I know this much: you can never be too grateful for what God gives you. And of all the lessons I have learned so far, that may well be the most valuable. A

Looking Back and Ahead

The theology behind the permanent diaconate

BY SCOTT DODGE

The Second Vatican Council's restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order of ordained ministry represents both a retrieval from tradition and an opening up of the church to the world. In the sense that one of the council's major tasks was to return to the sources of Christian tradition, specifically to the early church with its many diverse ministries, the permanent diaconate is a retrieval. Yet as William Ditewig has observed in *The Emerging Diaconate*, an indispensable book for anyone wanting to understand the state of the permanent diaconate in the United States, the diaconate envisioned by Vatican II "was never intended to recreate the patristic diaconate." Rather, it was intended as an authentic updating of the tradition. The restoration of the diaconate marked a step toward a renewed theology of ordained ministry, which had become somewhat distorted and ossified over the four centuries since the Council of Trent.

Like the other major reforms of Vatican II, the initiative behind the restoration began much earlier. As a permanent order, the diaconate had gone into decline in the fourth century; it continued to diminish until the Middle Ages when it was reduced to an exclusively transitional order of ministry on the path to priesthood. The initiative for restoration of the diaconate is rooted in the Council of Trent, which called for a restoration of all orders of ministry, major and minor. While it is a stretch to assert that the bishops at Trent called for a full restoration of the permanent diaconate, they did seek a fuller expression of this ancient ministry. But no restoration took place. Instead, the diaconate remained a transitional order for another 400 years. Then in 1964, during deliberations on the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*), the bishops of Vatican II expressed widespread approval for the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order.

The modern impetus for the restoration can be traced to conversations among German Catholic clergy incarcerated in the prison camp at Dachau during World War II. They talked about the need to expand the ministry of the church to the whole of society, reaching beyond the walls of the sanctuary, behind which the church had retreated since the political upheavals of the 18th, 19th and nearly half of the 20th centuries. Deacons could help the church surmount anticlericalism and rebuild the church, enabling it to contribute to the rebuilding of European society.

After the war, those priests continued to meet and began including lay people in their meetings, forming what were known as deacon circles. These groups began to multiply rapidly in Germany and in other Western European countries, like France and Italy. The discussions expanded to include concerns like deacons playing a vital role in overcoming the estrangement of many Catholics from the church, especially those put off by an overly professionalized clergy. As catalysts, deacons would extend the church's ministry, awakening the laity to respond to their own baptismal vocation. To accomplish these goals, they envisioned that most permanent deacons (though not all) would be married men who worked in secular occupations.

By the time Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council, the movement had become international and well organized, but remained exclusively Western European. It set up an office in Rome before the council opened and began advocating the restoration of the permanent diaconate, even as the Roman Curia drafted schemas for consideration by council participants. This grassroots organization and effort is what allowed this proposal to receive an overwhelmingly positive response from Catholic bishops.

Celibacy No Longer Required

Two documents briefly tell the story of the restoration. First, a section of the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" specifically calls for the restoration of the permanent diaconate (No. 29): "At the lower level of the hierarchy are deacons." It goes on to cite an ancient document that describes the diaconate as sacramental in nature, being conferred "not unto priesthood, but unto a ministry of service," thus, "strengthened by sacramental grace" deacons serve in the Eucharistic liturgy and in the ministries "of the word, and of charity to the people of God." The council fathers concluded that "the diaconate can in the future be restored as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy." With the consent of the pope, wrote the conciliar bishops, married men could be ordained deacons. Second, the "Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite" (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, No. 17) calls for the restoration of the perma-

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nent diaconate in those churches of the Eastern Rite where it had disappeared.

The brevity of treatment in the council's documents should not prevent us from recognizing the significance of the restoration of the permanent diaconate, which represents a return to the practice of the early church and the deconstruction of an outdated view of ministry that prevailed since Trent. It does this by no longer requiring celibacy as a condition for receiving holy orders. Although an article in Studia Canonica, published in 2005, opened a discussion about whether the 1983 Code of Canon Law requires married permanent deacons to live in continence, the current discipline of the church does not require deacons to give up having sexual relations with their wives. On the contrary, there is a growing body of literature that makes positive connections between the sacraments of matrimony and holy orders, both of which are sacraments at the service of the church's communion.

On June 18, 1967, Pope Paul VI authorized the re-establishment of the permanent diaconate by national bishops' conferences, after they received the approval of the Holy See. Acting on the council's recommendation, Pope Paul permitted married men to be ordained permanent deacons. With authorization, even in the absence of governing norms, bishops began to establish formation programs for the purpose of preparing men for ordination as permanent deacons. By the mid-1970s, in the United States and in other parts of the world the first groups of permanent deacons were ordained. A vast majority were married men and fathers who made their living by working in secular occupations.

Four developments since Vatican II help to trace the evolution of the permanent diaconate in the United States:

- A new Code of Canon Law, necessitated by the council, was promulgated, given to the church by Pope John Paul II in 1983;
- The Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education issued *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* in 1998, 31 years after the restoration and more than 25 years after the first of the permanent deacons were ordained;
- That same year, the Congregation for the Clergy issued its *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*;
- A *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* was issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2005. It is now used by dioceses in this country for initial and ongoing formation of permanent deacons. In seeking to emphasize the unique identity of the permanent deacon, the *National Directory* states that ordination makes the deacon "a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy." Hence, the deacon possesses "a distinct identity and integrity in the Church that marks him as neither a lay person nor a priest; rather, the deacon is a cleric who is ordained to *diakonia*, namely, a service to God's People in communion with the bishop and his body of priests" (No. 29).

PHOTO: CNS/NANCY WIECHEC

Permanent Deacons Worldwide

31,000 permanent deacons worldwide
- **16,935** in the United States
- **9,978** in Europe
- **5,625** in the Americas without the United States
- **677** in Africa, Asia and Oceania

500 are members of religious orders

60 = average age in the United States
41 = average age in rest of world

U.S DATA FROM 2009 OFFICIAL CATHOLIC DIRECTORY.
WORLD DATA FROM 2002 VATICAN YEARBOOK.

Snapshot of a Diocese

Events in a diocese like mine are typical of the movement in the United States. The Diocese of Salt Lake City began forming men to be deacons almost immediately after the Holy See approved the request of the national conference of bishops. On Dec. 26, 1976, the feast of St. Stephen, Bishop Joseph Lennox Federal, who attended all the sessions of

Vatican II, ordained 11 deacons. Since then, despite the lack of a seminary or even a Catholic college, the diocese has ordained seven additional classes of deacons, with another less than a year away from ordination.

The expectations for the first deacons in my diocese were not very clear. Like diocesan priests, deacons were assigned to parishes and served there, at first on a limited basis. With the tremendous growth in the number of Catholics and the concurrent decline in priestly vocations, the role of deacons began to become clearer. More and more deacons preached, baptized and witnessed marriages, besides preparing people for these sacraments. Our diocese was the first in the country to install a permanent deacon, Silvio Mayo, as diocesan chancellor, a position in which he continues to serve.

ON THE WEB

From the archives, the editors on the restoration of the permanent diaconate. americamagazine.org/pages.

But such assignments remain the exception. For the most part, deacons serve in parishes, oftentimes as a kind of part-time associate pastor, a "mini-priest," a cleric with limited faculties. Many argue that this relatively narrow scope keeps the diaconate from developing its proper ecclesial identity—which should include such ministries as outreach to the poor, to the sick and homebound and working with prisoners, as well as administrative roles in parishes, dioceses and Catholic institutions. In recent years, almost a third of the permanent deacons in the United States work in full-time ministry. This is a large increase over the very few who did so in the early years of the order's restoration. This is largely a positive trend that is leading to the expansion of diaconal ministry to people who are often underserved.

The establishment of a restored and updated diaconate remains one of the most significant achievements of the Second Vatican Council. Yet more than 40 years after the council, a theology of this order of ministry in its updated form is still being worked out. In seeking to articulate a clearer theology, one must take care not to limit unduly or artificially the ministry of deacons, which by its very nature is dynamic, being rooted in the Spirit-given gifts of each deacon.

Deacon Owen Cummings, responding to Dr. Ditewig's book, *The Emerging Diaconate*, wisely observed that "the permanent diaconate cannot make sense in the church until the entire church is diaconal in its life." It is the task of deacons to bring about this transformation, because we are ordained not only to put our own gifts at the service of the church and the world, but also to foster the Spirit's many gifts poured out on the people of God. Being configured to Christ in a particular way through ordination to service, the deacon leads by example, showing how service is integral to the baptismal vocation of every Christian. A

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Sign-on Statement in Support of the Employee Free Choice Act

We speak as scholars who are committed to Catholic Social Teaching concerning the human right of workers to organize employee unions. The Magisterium of the Catholic Church recognizes "*the fundamental role played by labor unions, whose existence is connected with the right to form associations or unions to defend the vital interests of workers employed in the various professions.*" Indeed, the Catholic Church holds that unions "are a positive influence for social order and solidarity, and are therefore an *indispensible element of social life.*" Because Catholic teaching is based on natural law, we believe the Church's teachings have relevance not only to Catholic institutions but also to the broader civil society. Specifically, we hold the following:

- **The present legal and moral framework that is intended to assist workers to form unions is badly broken.** Workers who seek to form unions are routinely met with employer resistance to their right to organize. Many employers intimidate, ostracize, or fire union organizers, deny free speech to workers on the job, threaten the loss of jobs and benefits, and hire "union avoidance" firms that – despite employers' protests to the contrary – actively seek to *prevent* union elections from taking place at all. Present labor law is so weak that when elections actually take place many employers *ignore* the results with little impunity and when employers *do* bargain it can take years to reach a first contract, if at all.
- **There is an a priori presumption for unions in Catholic Social Teaching**. Catholic teaching states that the right to organize unions is based on the human right of freedom of association that is found in the natural law. The right to organize belongs to the workers alone and cannot be abridged or annulled by civil or ecclesiastical authorities. The method or venue that workers choose to form a union is *also* their choice: workers may say yea or nay, stand or sit, sign statements or cards, or hold a secret ballot election. The right of workers to freely choose unions necessarily involves their right to decide how they shall decide for or against a union.
- **The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) is rooted in and supported by Catholic Social Teaching.** The EFCA would: (1) Recognize the right of workers to join a union through filing signed cards – know as "card check" -- that state their decision to form a union; (2) mandate mediation and arbitration if a first contract cannot be negotiated within the first 90 days; (3) impose stronger penalties on employers that violate workers' rights. Workers can also choose a secret ballot election *if that is their choice*. These provisions strongly reflect the Catholic position that the decision to form or join unions is *always* the workers' choice. Most importantly, the workers' decision to unionize must *not* meet with hostility or resistance from employers.

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Spirituality in the Wild

BY CAROL K. COBURN

My companion said it out loud first: "Carol, we're in trouble." She was right. Early that morning we had set off for the last leg of a five-day backpacking trek through the beautiful but challenging Weminuche Wilderness in southern Colorado. We had survived fierce sun, raging creek crossings, snowy glaciers on the Continental Divide, avalanche crossings, a hail storm and climbs of over 11,000 feet. Now we stood on a seemingly endless ridge that dropped 50 feet to a mountain river ripping down the gorge on its way from a glacier lake to a reservoir, where a campground and our car awaited. The trail had simply vanished into endless overgrown forest, steep angles and craggy rock ledges. As the more experienced backpacker, I had to figure a way down with our 50-pound packs. No trail was in sight, and I knew the path of the river was the only road map to the car.

After much thinking and silent praying, I decided we would go down the ridge on our bellies with our backpacks off, sliding them one at a time as we descended, using strategically positioned handholds and footholds. It was slow, painful and frightening but successful—so far so good!

Leap of Faith

We regrouped on the edge of the river, strapped on our packs and hoped simply to walk alongside it until we could pick up the trail on the other side. This worked until we reached a point where the edge of the cold, crashing river met the wall of the gorge and there was nowhere to go but into the freezing water to continue our descent. I do not know how long I stood and looked into the river before finding the courage to take that first step. Just below the clear, deep and fast-moving water I could see a very large root submerged but jutting out from the side of the gorge. I put weight on it tentatively; it felt strong and stable. How it would respond to our weight with our heavy packs, I had no idea. I have used the phrase "leap of faith" cavalierly in the past, but this was the real thing. No matter how long I looked at that root, I would not know until I leapt whether I had made a wise decision. Then I stepped. It held me and my companion. Although it took us that evening and part of the next day, we worked our way down the river and found the trail, as we had hoped. In soggy boots and clothes we trudged quietly and painfully to the campground and our car.

ART: DAN SALAMIDA

Wilderness as Leveler

The wilderness areas are still wild, untamed and exist on their own terms. As yet they are untouched by human ideas of civilization. That is the attraction. Backpacking in the wilderness is an experience that never fails to put me in my place, not as a master of the natural world but merely a player, a small piece of the cosmic puzzle.

The wilderness is a leveler for humans who base self-perception on education, age, race, gender, socioeconomic class or the like. The wilderness does not care who you are or what you have done; it will reward or punish you just the same. Money allows you to shield yourself through the use of gadgets, high-tech clothing and equipment, but these give a false sense of security. Such misplaced confidence makes you less watchful and less mindful; and these "crutches" can be negated by unexpected circumstances or when they simply do not work. Ironically, scientific research on the human brain

CAROL K. COBURN, *an avid backpacker, is a professor of American religious history at Avila University in Kansas City, Mo.*

shows that we have far more natural survival strategies than we realize or use. Underused skills rust in the urban confines of the 21st century; we have forgotten them. We have been lulled into a sedentary complacency of body and mind. We spend our brainpower figuring out ways to outsmart and "tame" the wilderness, with little time for understanding, appreciating and coexisting with it. It has been made into the enemy, something to conquer and control—an adversarial relationship that has made our time in the natural world all about winning or losing. In actuality that is not only a foolish paradigm but a false one, socially constructed and meaningless within the context of the natural world.

I love the life of the mind and my academic life, but I never want to fail to appreciate the life of the body and spirit. My physical experiences have brought me into closer touch with my spirituality than almost any other aspect of my existence. I am more apt to find God in nature than in a building full of people. Backpacking in the wilderness focuses my attention, forcing me to be mindful of the present, not obsessing about the past or future. I have to find and stay on the trail using only a topographic map, compass and my powers of observation. I have to avoid the dangers around me and respect the fact that I am a visitor in a world of other living things. I have to be mindful of the weather and where to camp, obtain water, prepare food and sleep safely at night. My clever brain identifies the basic elements. Ultimately, it does not matter how technologically savvy I am, how many degrees I have or the amount of money in my bank account. The focus is here and now, and I must be ready to negotiate my survival for the next few days.

Jesus' Wilderness Experience

I am not a biblical scholar or a trained theologian, but the story of Jesus in the wilderness makes complete sense to me. He went there to escape, think and clear his head of the social and political whirlwind. The temptations to bail, take the easier path and avoid the inevitable were there, as they are for all of us. But Jesus needed the wilderness to experience the fear, the uncertainty and the elemental aspects of who he was. I am convinced no other experience could have helped him crystallize who he was and what he needed to do. I am also convinced that the wilderness experience and his acute physical and spiritual survival skills, challenged by severe deprivations and temptations, gave him the courage to fulfil his destiny.

Living as I do in the fast-paced 21st century, with a life full of demands and stress, going into the wilderness helps me understand my own existence. Compared with the life and purpose of Jesus, my life is insignificant, but his example holds powerful truth for me. In a small but significant way, it helps me move forward to whatever and wherever forward is. It gives me perspective and, more important, an understanding of who I am and why I am here. Ultimately, it nourishes my soul and provides balance in the crazy world I return to, helping me remember that life is much more than my daily to-do list. In *The Soul's Religion*, Thomas Moore wrote: "To be spiritual is to be taken over by a mysterious divine compulsion to manifest some aspect of life's deepest force. We become most who we are when we allow the spirit to dismember us, unsettling our plans and understandings, remaking us from our very foundations.... [It is] the invitation of the spirit to become who we are and not who we think we ought to be."

The wilderness connects me to life's deepest force and challenges me to reach beyond the everyday—an invitation to infinite possibilities. A

FAITH IN FOCUS

The Breaking of the Bread

In far-flung places, Jesus is made present.

BY CHARLES MURPHY

Many of us find familiar the experience of those discouraged disciples walking to Emmaus on the first Easter Sunday afternoon. Their disillusion turned into joy that evening when they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:31). While only certain witnesses met the risen Jesus in history, however, all Christians to this day can recognize his presence in every celebration of the Eucharist.

Having been a priest for many years, I describe here how I recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread on four particular occasions when I presided over the celebration of the Eucharist; two of those times took place early after ordination and two much later. Each time I recognized a different dimension of who Jesus is.

The Martyr

Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome

It was the tradition in Rome, where I was ordained a priest, to offer not just one but three "first Masses." My second "first Mass" took place on the ancient Via Salaria in the catacomb of Priscilla.

Priscilla was a patrician woman of the second century and a member of a Christian household on whose property the catacomb was located. The second century was a time of great persecution, and among the martyrs interred in the catacomb's walls were Pope Marcellinus, Saints Felix and Philip, Prisca, Pudentiana, Praxedes and many others.

I had visited this catacomb many times, even though it is not the most attractive to pilgrims, because I loved its striking wall paintings, especially the figure of a woman at prayer, her head veiled and arms raised in a gesture still recognized by all of us. Jesus the Good Shepherd appears as a strapping, beardless youth, holding on his strong shoulders a large ram. The catacomb also contains the oldest known image of the Virgin Mary, her body thrust lovingly toward the child in her lap.

The Mass I celebrated took place in a small room called the Greek chapel. Over my head was a painting of the Last Supper in which Jesus is seated in the place of honor at the right end of a crowded banquet sofa. Near him as he breaks the bread are loaves and fishes, reminders of the miracle that had anticipated the institution of the Eucharist. The circumstances of this Mass were simple, even austere, and the art touchingly naïve. The power of the event came from the palpable witness of those who centuries earlier had celebrated Mass here, much as we were doing now. They gave up their lives in witness to Christ, who laid down his own life for the sake of the many. That aspect of Jesus was revealed to me that day as well as the commission of the participants to be witnesses to Christ until the end of time, which is part of every celebration of the Eucharist.

The Healer

Lourdes, France

Lourdes is a small village near the Pyrenees Mountains, which form the border between France and Spain. It is a famous place of pilgrimage, particularly for the sick, because of what happened there in 1858. With the pressure of adolescence and the approaching religious milestone of her confirmation, Bernadette Soubirous one day disobeyed her mother and crossed a small river to gather wood. There, in a grotto, Bernadette encountered someone she

ART: JULIE LONNEMAN

MSGR. CHARLES MURPHY, S.T.D., *is director of the diaconate formation program for the Diocese of Portland, Me., and author of the forthcoming* The Body Is the Soul's Workshop: Recovering the Christian Practice of Fasting *(Ave Maria).*

described as a beautiful lady, who was dressed in white and wore a belt of blue. The beautiful lady was very kind.

On another visit to the grotto, Bernadette asked the lady what her name was; she replied, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Bernadette did not know that in 1854 the pope had conferred this title upon Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Bernadette was instructed to make a hole in the ground; from it came a well of water. This is the source of the water that attracts pilgrims who seek healing of mind and body.

Within a week of my ordination I went with my parents to Lourdes. I was assigned the hour of 6 a.m. for the Mass I would celebrate in the grotto the next day. As I began the celebration, the only light came from a tree of candles burning in front of the niche where Mary had appeared. I did not know if anyone other than my parents was present; all I could hear was the sound of the river flowing by. As the Mass progressed the sun rose, and I was startled to see hundreds of people surrounding us and participating in the liturgy. At this breaking of the bread they were seeking the Jesus who healed bodies and souls, the divine physician who still made the blind see and the lame walk.

The Lord of Nature

Base of Mount Katahdin, Me.

Mount Katahdin is Maine's iconic mountain. Three times during the 10 years I served as pastor in my last parish, I accompanied our high school youth to Baxter State Park and Mount Katahdin, and our junior high youth to Cobscook State Park, for wilderness retreats. These young parishioners had until then attended Mass only indoors. My aim was to let them experience the Eucharist in natural settings in the hope that they might discover the Jesus who told us to look, just look, at the lilies of the field and the birds of the air to discover the Father's love for all creatures, even the humblest.

Such spectacular settings cannot help but inspire awe and wonder. Outside our usual surroundings, sleeping in tents upon the ground, eating food we prepared for ourselves, we gained new perspective on our lives. In the human-made structures in which we typically celebrate the Eucharist, we can miss the profound grounding of religious feasts and symbols in the world of nature. All of nature, not just human beings, as St. Paul wrote, groans for redemption. At the base of the majestic Mount Katahdin we encountered Jesus in all his cosmic reality.

The Man for All Cultures

Pattaya, Thailand

Last summer with some Thai parishioners I made a return visit to Thailand. Toward the end of our stay we spent a weekend in a house they owned in Pattaya, on the Indian Ocean. At Sunday Mass in the parish church of St. Nikolaus, we discovered a large, diverse congregation gathered under the roof of a building that, because of the intense heat, had no sides. The altar servers, wearing white albs, were barefoot. As the procession moved toward the sanctuary, the congregation bowed as we passed, giving the respectful "wau" gesture, humbly touching their folded hands to their bent foreheads.

When the Mass was over our group paid a visit to the cemetery on the grounds of the church where my parishioners' parents were buried. They had come as boat people to Bangkok to escape religious persecution of Catholics in their native China. There we offered prayers for the dead, a remembrance that is part of the Buddhist and Catholic cultures.

Then we drove to a large Catholic orphanage, home to hundreds of children, some left on the doorstep just after birth. It was to the cribs of these infants that we were directed. Some of us readily picked up the babies and held them, making them smile. I could not. I did not want to form a bond with these

beautiful babies and then have to return them to their cribs and leave.

At Pattaya I rediscovered the Jesus who belongs to all peoples and cultures, including those that are very different from the one in which I grew up. Jesus was born an Asian. In the first millennium he was introduced to Europe and Africa, in the second to America. It is only natural for his fellow Asian people to know him in the breaking of the bread.

. . .

I was the priest at the eucharistic celebrations I have described, but only as the instrument of the multifaceted Christ who keeps revealing himself in new and different ways to every congregation and also to me. Christ who lays down his life, who heals, who is the wisdom behind the whole natural world, and who is comfortable with cultures far different from our own is the one who walks with us, at first as a stranger until we recognize him in each breaking of the bread. A

IDEAS | ROBERT E. LAUDER

ACCEPT THE ABSURD

Beckett and Kierkegaard, Godot and Christ

Why, while viewing the recent all-star Broadway revival of Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot," did I think of Søren Kierkegaard?

Beckett's creation incarnates everything that "Theater of the Absurd" has come to represent. Two hobos, Estragon and Vladimir, are waiting for Godot (pronounced in the production GOD-oh). They have an appointment with him, but it is not clear to them or to us where or when the meeting is supposed to take place. Standing on a country road, the hobos speak the following opening lines:

Estragon: "Nothing to be done."
Vladimir: "I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying, Vladimir be reasonable, you haven't tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. So there you are again."

This exchange, as well as almost all the others between the two characters, suggests both the confusion in their communication and the aimlessness of their existence. They often speak past one another. Any hope for meaning is tied to their meeting Godot. Stuck in a dead end, they won't move on. Or rather, they cannot move on because the future looks as pointless as the present.

The pronunciation of the name of the anticipated visitor emphasizes that they are waiting for God. Yet the divine visitor never arrives. Years ago Eugene O'Neill wrote, "The playwright today must dig at the roots of the sickness of

ON THE WEB
Robert Barron reviews
"The Stoning of Soraya M."
americamagazine.org/culture

Nathan Lane, John Goodman and Bill Irwin in "Waiting for Godot"

PHOTO: ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY/JOAN MARCUS

today as he feels it—the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfying new one for the surviving primitive religious instinct to find a meaning for life in and to comfort its fears of death with."

The death or absence of God is the horizon against which some of the most highly respected playwrights of the 20th century created their work. I think of Luigi Pirandello's six characters searching for a meaningful narrative, of Edward Albee's angry creations making contact only through violence, of Harold Pinter's people mouthing non-sequiturs as they search for their identity and of Eugene O'Neill's Tyrone family looking for forgiveness. All these characters exist in a milieu in which God's absence has serious consequences for human fulfillment. All of them struggle against what Paul Tillich called the threat of nonbeing: the threat of self-rejection, guilt, despair, fate and death. Beckett has taken the premise of God's death to its logical (or illogical) conclusion.

Of course we could look to any of the atheistic existentialists for insights into the absurd. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his essay "Existentialism Is a Humanism," wrote: "And when we speak of 'abandonment'...we only mean to say that God does not exist, and that it is necessary to draw the consequences of his absence right to the end.... Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon, either within or outside himself."

Dramatizing God's "absence right to the end," Beckett has gone beyond philosophical reflection and offered theatergoers an actual experience of absurdity.

It is as Martin Esslin writes in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*: "The Theatre of the Absurd has renounced arguing *about* the absurdity of the

human condition, it merely *presents* it in being.… This is the difference… between the *idea* of God in the works of Thomas Aquinas or Spinoza and the *intuition* of God in those of St. John of the Cross or Meister Eckhart—the difference between theory and experience."

Adventure in Grace

The inadequacy of reason and logic that the Theatre of the Absurd depicts and its attempt to offer an experience of the absurd are what have joined Beckett and Kierkegaard in my mind. Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism and a deeply committed Christian, characterized the Incarnation as absurd. By "absurdity" Kierkegaard meant not what is lacking in meaning but rather what is full of mystery, the superabundance of meaning, the supra-rational, that which is beyond human comprehension.

For the Danish religious thinker, human reason confronting the Incarnation was inadequate; it could neither prove the Christ-event nor understand it completely. Logic cannot help. How could the divine become human? It sounds absurd but it is true. How could eternity enter time? Absurd, but true. How could the Infinite become the finite? Also absurd but true. To accept the Incarnation and experience Christ, a leap of faith is necessary. An objective, impartial, scientific approach to the Incarnation, an approach so applauded by Kierkegaard's contemporaries as well as ours, could not reach the reality of the God-man, who is the Truth.

In speaking of the absurd Kierkegaard meant mystery, awesome and wonderful, which or who calls us into relationship. Unlike the absurd as depicted by Beckett, the absurd of the Christian existentialist Kierkegaard involves us and invites us into the future.

Two crucial moments in Beckett's play highlight the difference. At the end of the first act Estragon says, "Well, shall we go?" to which Vladimir responds, "Yes, let's go." They do not move. Then at the end of the second act Vladimir says, "Well? Shall we go?" and Estragon answers, "Yes, let's go." Again they do not move. They cannot move because without God, there is no direction or goal to the human journey. Adrift, the two are pilgrims without a homeland. For Kierkegaard, however, the leap toward the "absurdity" of the Incarnate God brings about an encounter with infinite love. It is the beginning of a relationship that transforms human living into an adventure in grace that extends beyond the grave.

REV. ROBERT E. LAUDER, *professor of philosophy at St. John's University in New York, is the author of* Magnetized by God: Religious Encounters Through Film, Theater, Literature and Painting *(2004).*

THEATER | ROB WEINERT-KENDT

A WAR ON WOMEN

Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning 'Ruined'

PHOTO: MANHATTAN THEATER CLUB AT NEW YORK CITY CENTER/JOAN MARCUS

Condola Rashud and Quincy Tyler Bernstine in "Ruined"

The play of the year is not on Broadway and was not featured at the recent Tony Awards. It is a sprawling yet intimate drama set in a brothel in the war-torn Congolese jungle, with the decidedly gloomy title "Ruined." That may sound like unlikely hit material, but it is hard to argue with success: "Ruined" opened in February at the Off-Broadway Manhattan Theatre Club, nabbed a Pulitzer Prize in April and has just been extended through the end of August. And that will not be the last of "Ruined," a long-fused critical and commercial firecracker that seems destined to crackle through the culture for some time; it will almost certainly appear at a major regional theater near you, not to mention in an inevitable HBO film version.

Does "Ruined" merit the hoopla?

There is no question that this is a major play by a major playwright. Only a writer of surpassing craft and sensitivity could juggle narrative detail and mortal suspense, gritty reportage and theatrical artifice as deftly as Lynn Nottage does, as she portrays the tragic efforts of a hard-nosed madam, Mama Nadi, to serve all sides in an ever-shifting conflict. If viewers detect echoes of "Mother Courage," about a war profiteer crushed in the gears of the machine she serves, the parallel is not accidental. Nottage was partly inspired by Bertolt Brecht's antiwar classic.

But unlike Brecht, who set his play during the distant Thirty Years War, Nottage is writing about a contemporary conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where peace accords in 2003 did little to stem ongoing intertribal violence, cross-border incursions from Rwanda and Uganda, and bitter, bloody competition for control of natural resources. Not coincidentally, it is also the region with the worst statistics on sexual violence against women. On a fact-finding trip to Africa with the director Kate Whoriskey, Nottage interviewed several women fleeing the mayhem in the D.R.C., who provided a catalogue of routine brutality: conscription into prostitution, rape as an instrument of terror and, most harrowing, the genital mutilation that gives the play its title.

Transmuting these horrors into a watchable and memorable evening of theater is Nottage's core achievement. Faced with central Africa's seemingly intractable cycles of violence, most writers would be able to convey little more than spluttering outrage, if indeed they could bring themselves to write anything about it at all. It is a measure of Nottage's considerable empathetic strength and moral subtlety that she brings nuance and contrast to this harsh world, and that her characters, crucially for themselves but also for the audience, do not simply scrap

and scheme but find room to sing, laugh, even hope.

What finally makes "Ruined" stick, though, is as much the medium as the message. Theater gives audiences the nearly tactile experience of live bodies moving in space, sharing the air we breathe (this is especially true of the Manhattan Theater Club's small Off-Broadway house). This palpable corporeality renders the play's central image—the notion that the wars in Africa are being fought on women's bodies—all the more devastating and immediate. This is the irony of catharsis: A play as strong and serious as "Ruined," embodied here by 12 brilliant actors, can make us powerfully feel its characters' suffering—but it is a suffering that would be unbearable if it were not shared in the intense intimacy of a theater.

While registering a collective twinge of virtual sympathy in a comfortable New York theater could never be confused with the sort of concrete action that might improve the lot of the least of us, it would be a mistake to dismiss the social and, yes, even political impact of a work like "Ruined." When an injustice is reported and duly deplored, it is nudged ever further into the punishing light of judgment; when it is dramatized and deeply felt, it moves ever closer to the heart of mercy.

ROB WEINERT-KENDT *is an arts journalist based in Brooklyn who has written for The New York Times and TimeOut New York. He writes a blog, "The Wicked Stage."*

BOOKS | PETER HEINEGG

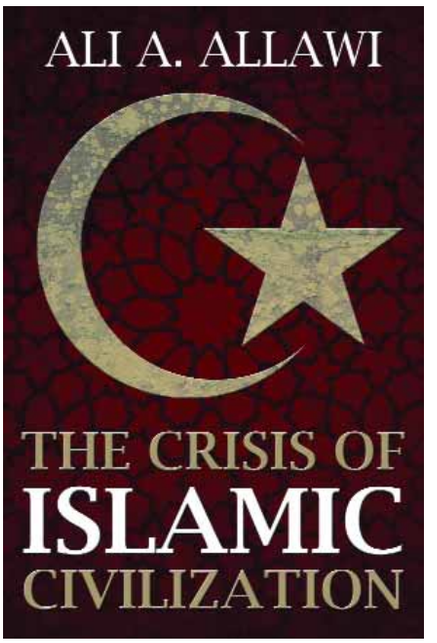
DECLINE (YES) AND FALL (MAYBE)

THE CRISIS OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

By Ali A. Allawi
Yale Univ. Press. 320p $27.50
ISBN 9780300139310

When it comes to understanding Islam, the Western world has centuries of catching up to do (the reverse is also true); so we can expect the current spate of guides-for-the-culturally-perplexed (by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Bernard Lewis and others) to grow and swell. But East being East and West being West, it takes an ecumenical polymath even to try to explain one to the other; and no such explanation will satisfy more than a large minority of readers.

Ali Allawi, who is not to be confused with his more famous and reputedly crooked cousin Iyad Allawi (interim prime minister of Iraq in 2004 and 2005), has impressive credentials. He holds a B.S. in civil and environmental engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology



along with an M.B.A. from Harvard. He served as minister of defense and finance for the Iraqi government in 2005-6, and he is presently a senior visiting fellow at Princeton. When he talks politics, economics and history, he is quite convincing, but less so when he tackles philosophy and theology. His topic, in any case, would exhaust and defeat an army of scholars, so the best he could have managed was to raise a lot of provocative questions—and he has done just that.

The first—and one he never comes close to answering—is: What exactly is Islamic civilization? It is not just Islam, which he assumes will survive even the most baleful prospects of contemporary Islamic nations. It is not the original *umma* of Muhammad and his first companions; it is not the reign of the Abbasids (758-1258); and it is not the golden age of 10th-century Muslim Spain. It is not, to be sure, the Ottoman Empire, though Allawi cannot suppress a twinge of Ottoman nostalgia. In point of fact, he refuses to canonize any historical period or region as the supreme instance of Islamic civilization.

But that civilization did flourish once—for example, when the great 14th-century Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta set out on his epic journey of more than 70,000 miles across the length and breadth of the Muslim world through Africa, Asia and Europe, where, despite the spectacular diversity of peoples and languages, he always felt more or less at home. Whereas now there is the Ibn Battuta Mall in Dubai, the largest themed shopping center on the planet. And beyond the glitzy plutocratic excess of the Persian Gulf states lies the all but endless misery of the Muslim world: tyrannical, dysfunctional governments; anemic economies (Muslims make up 22 percent of the earth's population, but produce only 6 percent of its wealth); wretched educational systems; confusion and anomie.

Allawi pulls no punches and spares no one, from Al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists to rigid religious conserva-

tives to Westernizing liberal elites. While he blames the dreadful legacy of colonialism, he acknowledges that Islamic civilization was in trouble long before the Europeans and Americans arrived. The scientific discoveries, technological innovations, military hardware, and sophisticated political and bureaucratic skills that the capitalist West brought in stunned Muslims, precisely because they were eons ahead of anything the Muslims had.

Well, none of that story is news; so what's to be done now? Still scarred by his up-close-and-personal experience of Saddam's Baathist nightmare and the sectarian bloodbath that followed, Allawi is not at all confident that the culture he loves can be saved. At times he wonders if it isn't already lost. His solution is a return to Islam and Shariah. But, once again, what does he mean by that? Having damned both the ideological right and left, where specifically does he want to go?

Allawi does not say. He stresses Islam's foundational vision of "the absolute transcendence of the divine essence"—but how does that differ from Judaism and Christianity? He is fond of Sufism and Muslim mysticism generally; but how could that esoteric doctrine become a faith for the masses? He speaks warmly of Shariah (or "the Sharia," as in "the Torah"); but which version of it does he have in mind, especially since the Muslim world today gets by with borrowed Western law codes or mixtures of traditional and modern legislation (and the most "orthodox" Muslim country, Saudi Arabia, is a juridical dystopia)?

For non-Muslims, Allawi's insistence on "the textual certainty of the Qur'an as the unaltered and unalterable word of God" creates further headaches. What are we to make of Allah's command (4:34) to beat disobedient wives, cut the hands off thieves (5:38) or "slay the idolaters wherever you find them" (9:5)? Many Christians would likely argue that they have been down the road of *sola Scriptura* before, and they would just as soon avoid it. Fortunately for Allawi, he can assume that his Muslim readers believe without hesitation in a flawless divine text; so he need not descend into sticky details.

ON THE WEB
America's Book Club reviews Colm Tóibín's "Brooklyn."
americamagazine.org/podcast

In the end, Allawi is oddly reminiscent of T. S. Eliot's narrator in *The Waste Land*: He throws up his hands in horror at the hideous conditions prevalent in the soulless secular status quo; yet he catches glimpses of salvation rooted in the oldest and apparently abandoned wellsprings of belief. And while quaffing his cup of three parts despair, one part hope, he has shored an interesting set of "fragments against my ruin": re-interpretations of Islam by

authors few Americans have heard of, like the Iranian Abd-el Karim Soroush; new social-charitable groups, like the 'Adh wal Ihsan Society in Morocco; and a few cosmopolitan scholars, like the aforementioned Nasr.

But one or two swallows do not make a summer. He might feel better if he could go along with a Western-style privatization of religion, but he refuses to. So he is left with a long list of problems that he cannot handle: What is to become of the tens of millions of Muslims living anomalously in the kaffir First World? (They can't emigrate to the U.A.E.) Can Muslims create a world banking system that does not charge interest? Can there be Muslim science (not value-free)? What about Muslim feminism and environmentalism (subjects Allawi barely touches)? He deplores godless moral relativism, but can't there be noble atheists? And, finally, what about the secular classics of Muslim civilization, from the frankly impious poetry of Omar Khayyam to the wine-and-lust-filled *Arabian Nights*, the Persian *Book of Kings* or, newly translated from Urdu, the *Adventures of Amir Hamza*? Allawi does not breathe a word about such things. No matter, he raises enough issues—in a mostly balanced, well-documented way—to fuel a host of lively conversations (and heated disputes).

PETER HEINEGG *is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.*

MICHAEL SHIFTER

A POWERFUL GRIP

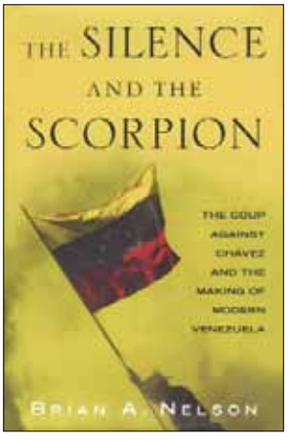
THE SILENCE AND THE SCORPION

The Coup Against Chávez and the Making of Modern Venezuela

By Brian A. Nelson
Nation Books. 384p $26.95
ISBN 9781568584188

In December 2002, during a national strike called by Venezuela's opposition to protest against President Hugo Chávez, a reporter in Caracas asked me a most unusual question: "Is this strike working or not?" I said I had no clue. After all, she was on the scene and I was 2,000 miles away in Washington, D.C. Half the people told her it was a great success, she said, while the other half claimed it was an utter failure. "What is going on?"

That journalist got a taste of the extraordinary polarization that has marked Venezuela since Chávez came to power more than a decade ago. Contradictory versions are part and parcel of analyses of Venezuelan politics, mirroring a sharply divided society. Chávez has become a favorite topic for authors, but the books written to date have tended to be either hagiographies or screeds attacking the Venezuelan leader. Impartial, balanced treatments are all too rare.



Fortunately, Brian A. Nelson's *The Silence and the Scorpion* is anything but tendentious. Nelson's refreshingly impartial and objective account focuses on the coup of April 11, 2002, in which the Chávez government was deposed. He uses this seminal event as an instructive vehicle to capture the rancor and mistrust among Venezuelans. Through extensive and probing interviews with those lined up on opposite sides of the conflict, Nelson effectively conveys the strong sentiments Chávez tends to arouse. He offers insight into the motivations of both Chávez supporters and detractors as well as an understanding of why reconciliation has been so elusive.

Nelson provides the reader with adequate context and background, but the vivid depictions of the famous, infamous and anonymous characters involved in the events surrounding the coup are the heart of his book. Rather than a neat-and-tidy story of good versus evil, what emerges is a highly confused series of actions and reactions, in which *chavistas*, or Chávez supporters, and the opposition feed off each other. Nelson highlights the coup-related violence in great detail, but also explains how the military, worried that they might be instructed to use violence against fellow Venezuelans to defend Chavez, did not stand in the way of the coup. Given the depth of the acrimony, it is fortunate that the toll from those tragic days was not even greater.

The Silence and the Scorpion makes it easy to understand why, more than a decade after coming to power, Chávez remains the country's most dominant and popular political figure. With superb communication skills and seductive rhetoric, Chávez put his finger on the legitimate grievances felt by Venezuela's poor majority, and his appeal for greater social justice has resonated. Despite the recent drop in prices, Chávez has been fortunate to have lots of oil revenue to spend on social projects. He also benefited from a notably inept political opposition and popular anger at the discredited political class that had presided over the country's stunning decline in the 1980s and 1990s.

In fact, one of the book's most

absorbing sections deals with the ill-fated presidency of the Venezuelan business leader and opposition figure Pedro Carmona, who briefly came to power once Chávez was deposed. Nelson describes the near delirium that reigned in the opposition after Chávez fell, inspiring the Carmona government to roll back his political program—including suspending the 1999 Constitution and dissolving the elected national legislature. Carmona badly overreached, alienating those in the opposition committed to democracy and mobilizing *chavistas* to rally around their leader. As has often been the case in Venezuela, opposition missteps ended up only bolstering Chávez.

More than seven years later, politicians—some from the old, "traditional," parties, others less experienced—have largely replaced businessmen, union leaders and media owners in the Venezuelan opposition. Though increasingly subject to government harassment and intimidation, the opposition today is striving to find an appealing alternative and an effective leader to challenge Chávez in 2012.

Nelson's treatment of the disputed role of the U.S. government in the 2002 coup is balanced and scrupulous. There is little question that the Bush administration barely disguised its glee when the coup took place, which badly undermined U.S. credibility on democracy. It is equally clear that those involved in the coup had had contact with U.S. officials. But as Nelson rightly notes, there is no evidence that this coup was manufactured by the United States or was in fact anything other than a product of domestic political tensions.

Though he says he was initially sympathetic toward Chávez, Nelson has become critical of his penchant for confrontation. That explains the book's title, which comes from a Venezuelan general's description of Chávez as a scorpion: "By his nature he was militant and aggressive and could never change." Despite his political gifts, Chávez has not governed effectively or taken advantage of the opportunity to transform his country in a positive way. His perpetual political battles do little to resolve the country's underlying problems of crime, corruption and economic mismanagement.

This book is a welcome contribution to the burgeoning literature on Venezuela under the controversial rule of Hugo Chávez. The 2002 coup gives the author a good handle to employ his impressive investigative and storytelling talents, and he succeeds in shedding new light on the complex questions facing Latin America's most polarized society. Given his rare access and credibility with key actors on both sides of the political spectrum, Nelson should consider tackling the next chapter in Venezuela's evolving drama.

MICHAEL SHIFTER *is vice president at the Inter-American Dialogue and adjunct professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.*

BOOK BRIEFS

CALLS TO KINDNESS; CREATION AND COMMANDMENTS

This is shaping up as the season of "kindness." I'll cite only three book examples. First, there is **On Kindness**, by Adam Phillips and Barbara Taylor (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $20 hardcover). Phillips is a psychoanalyst who has written 12 other books. Taylor has written acclaimed books on the history of feminism. Both writers reside in London, where this book made its debut. If, as they posit, kindness is necessary to an integrated life—and besides, it is shown that doing good makes us feel better—then why are we suspicious of kind behavior? One chapter provides "A Short History of Kindness" from the ancient philosophers through the Enlightenment to contemporary social theory. Rousseau, the authors argue, is a key figure in this history, his thoughts "providing a crucial bridge between past and present." The book abounds in insights—some startling—on the "pleasures and perils" of moving beyond self-interest to a communal spirit. And these involve the areas of sexuality, gender roles and mother-child bonding and childhood development.

Do One Nice Thing: Little Things You Can Do to Make the World a Lot Nicer is by Debbie Tenzer, an innovator and founder of DoOneNiceThing.com (Crown, $20 hardcover). The book is wise, practical and bursting with useful information. It is easy to fall victim to hopelessness or anxiety in a war-torn world where mistrust and fear are rampant. But Tenzer is living proof we need not stay mired there. Her Web site now benefits people across the globe. Each chapter of the book, beginning with "Do One Nice Thing…" ranges from "with friends and family" to "for children" and "for pets and the planet" to "things that heal," and others contain hundreds of suggestions on how and whom to help in creative, inexpensive ways. Throughout the author provides contact information, related Web sites and more. I know of no other book quite like this one—both upbeat and serious—but above all, consciousness-raising in many ways.

The recently released **Loukoumi's Good Deeds**, by Nick Katsoris, with illustrations by Rajesh Nagulakonda

—the third in a series—is for children ages 4 to 8 (NK Publications Inc., $15.95 softcover). And it comes with a CD narrated by Jennifer Aniston and John Aniston. The Grammy winner Gloria Gaynor and the Oscar winner Olympia Dukakis are the voices of the characters. (The author serves as general counsel for the Red Apple Group.) The eponymous character is a cuddly lamb, and the story follows her adventures over several days observing people helping others. So she begins doing the same with her friends and her parents. The book's refrain is, "Whatever you do, whatever you say, do something nice for someone today!" Now there's a message we might all take to heart. (By the way, the publisher is donating $2 from the sale of each book to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital).

• • •

Over the past few years, in a variety of settings and before various audiences, including youth, seminarians, scientists and world leaders, Pope Benedict XVI has spoken clearly and forcefully of Catholic social teaching on stewardship of all God's creation. The distinguished journalist and best-selling author Woodene Koenig-Bricker has diligently assembled the pope's messages and writings on environmental issues in **Ten Commandments for the Environment: Pope Benedict XVI Speaks Out for Creation and Justice** (Ave Maria Press, $15 paperback). Our "green Pope" preaches that we have a moral responsibility to live an eco-friendly lifestyle.

And the pope practices what he preaches. Unknown to many people is the fact that in 2007 "the Vatican became the world's first carbon-neutral country," and plans for other "green" projects are underway for Vatican City and Castel Gandolfo. Koenig-Bricker provides the narrative context and historical background to the papal writings contained herein. Many of the book's unsettling facts prompt an immediate response. Just a few: a quarter of the world's mammals and one out of every eight plants face extinction; there will be no glaciers in Glacier National Park by 2030. "In the face of such frightening prospects," the author notes, "Benedict is telling us…Christian and non-Christian alike, that we were created to be caregivers, stewards, champions of God's Creation—not despotic rulers."

And what are the Ten Commandments? By now they ought to be familiar. Here's just a sampling: in dealing with environmental problems, ethics and human dignity should come before technology (No. 4); ending global poverty is related to the environmental question, remembering that all the goods of the earth must be shared equitably (No. 7). Each is developed fully in a separate chapter.

Although not inscribed on stone tablets, these 21st-century commandments, Benedict would agree, are to be internalized and practiced by Catholics and all people of good faith. Our world, he would add, demands nothing less.

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Translator

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LETTERS

Justice for All

Kathleen McChesney focuses on the most important aspect of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in her article on its relevance: the protection of children ("Is the Charter Still Relevant?" 6/8). Another aspect, protection of an accused priest against defamation of his name and unjust removal from ministry, has been totally neglected in the charter's conception and administration. Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., pointed out in these pages ("Rights of Priests," 6/21/04) that the bishops had contradicted in their charter the very principles embraced in their November 2000 statement on criminal justice: the dignity and presumed innocence of the accused, and that punishment must fit the crime.

Dulles wrote that the charter totally rejected the canonical statutes of limitations, had ignored proportionality (a pat on someone's posterior to be treated the same as serial rape), had failed to define precisely "sexual abuse" (leaving it up to different bishops to make their own various definitions) and had failed to respect the presumption of innocence (removal from ministry without due process or admission of guilt).

We canonists are being sought by priests, possibly unjustly removed from ministry, sometimes even without prior notice and an opportunity to defend themselves. The bishop becomes arresting officer, prosecutor, judge, sentencing judge and appellant bench—a judicial absurdity.

In the interest of justice and intellectual consistency, the Dallas charter should be promptly amended on these issues.

(MSGR.) HARRY J. BYRNE, J.C.D.
New York, N.Y.

More Information, Please

Kathleen McChesney's article about the relevance of the Dallas charter affirms its need, but unfortunately deals with only part of the problem. Citing statistics about the cost of providing training to guide parishes in providing safe environments, McChesney ignores the issue of whether and how the funds have been expended to address the twofold problem of priestly formation and episcopal accountability to reduce the chances of predators entering or remaining in the priesthood.

What were those measures, and to what extent have those efforts been effective? How have those measures affected the screening and training of the seminarians who are now in formation? What changes have been mandated for seminaries? And what charter have our bishops embraced for their own behavior?

(DEAC.) MICHAEL D. CILETTI
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Power Politics

Thank you for your eloquent, if innocent, editorial on the "Community of Disciples" (6/22). Speaking of internal divisions within the American Catholic community, you state forcefully that "polarization must stop." Toward that end you recommend reaffirmation of shared principles, conversation led by the bishops about public policy, active civic engagement and most of all dialogue marked by "toleration, charity and respect." Your magazine regularly bears witness to those values.

But surely readers would benefit from a little history, reminding them that the American bishops, led by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, not too long ago were developing a capacity to do precisely what you suggest. Bernardin, like **America**'s editors, wanted to stop polarization and strengthen dialogue. But the Vatican, important U.S. bishops, and a handful of American Catholic intellectuals purposefully rejected key Bernardin-era projects, setting sharp limits on the teaching authority and later the budget and staff of the national episcopal conference, criticizing the consistent ethic of life as inconsistent with papal teaching and dismissing structures of shared responsibility through which "dialogue" might take place.

In fact, dialogue came under suspicion; and mutual respect, toleration of differences and the search for common

I warned you this would be a working vacation.

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

ground all were redefined as "liberal" values at odds with supposedly orthodox Catholic teaching. Bernardin-era moderates were accused of compromising Catholic truth for political purposes. Bernardin, who excelled at bringing passionate extremes to dialogue and consensus, was relocated as a figure of the "left," along with the theological followers of John Courtney Murray, S.J., the architect of Vatican II-era ideas about Catholic political responsibility. Followers of the Murray-Bernardin approach, not least the editors of **America**, soon learned that supporting dialogue, shared responsibility and mutual respect could be dangerous. Implementing appeals like your recent editorial could bring not only sharp criticism from self-appointed guardians of Catholic identity but penalties from ecclesiastical leaders less interested in the common good than in what they regard as Catholic integrity.

How this one-sided polarization all happened, at great cost to our country and our church, was and remains a matter of politics, the acquisition and exercise of power within as well as outside the community of disciples. We have to get tougher. Your editorial appeal for a renewal among Catholics of the practice of shared responsibility, civic and ecclesial, will lose its innocence only if many of us who agree with you decide to invest a portion of our personal and collective resources in projects to change the church and bring Catholic ideas and experience to constructive engagement with our common life as Americans. If we wait, we lose.

DAVID O'BRIEN
Dayton, Ohio

Keeping Cool

I have been a regular cover-to-cover reader of **America** for many years, and have found the content and commentary most helpful to growing and sustaining my faith. What I have admired the most was your willingness to take on the big issues and present views that challenge our church leaders and much conservative thinking. For the last year or two, though, I have detected a retreat from that aggressiveness, as if you are in a position of "lying low." I concluded, without any real evidence, that word had come down from Rome to "cool it."

I was impressed to read your editorial, "Community of Disciples," which sounded like your old self. Thank you for publishing it—it restores my confidence in the magazine.

DONALD SAULS
Wheaton, Ill.

From the Heart

My own heart filled and spilled over in tears as I read through to the end of "Ode to the Heart," the winner of your 2009 Foley Poetry Award (6/8). Brent Newsom sang for all parents and all those who choose life. What a magnificent tribute to our Creator God.

JANE CONNELLY
Lusby, Md.

Gifts for the Journey

In "More Than a Desk Job" (7/6), Ann M. Garrido captured the essence of what administration is supposed to be. I have served as the chief executive officer of numerous hospitals and health care centers and can speak firsthand of the stresses that administrators face on a daily basis. But when I read the New Testament and realize that administration is included among the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, I understand how many times I have found the answers to problems and questions that would ordinarily stump me!

As Garrido so beautifully states, "It is precisely through embracing the mystery and walking through it [administration] that our spiritual journey becomes salvific. We open ourselves up to transformation."

SARAH M. VOSS, O.S.B.
St. Paul, Minn.

Big Shoes to Fill

Thank you to George Anderson, S.J., for providing an informative summary of the life of Daniel Berrigan, S.J. ("Looking Back in Gratitude," 7/6). Berrigan's life of courage and commitment to God and his fellow humans raises the question: Who among us today will fill the shoes of the Berrigans, Mahatma Gandhi or Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? We are in dire need of someone with their commitments to social justice and freedom for all.

JAMES MAHON
San Bruno, Calif.

Words of Wisdom

I hope Julie Irwin Zimmerman's "Science and the Path to Parenthood" (7/6) will be circulated widely around the world. The response of the church to reproductive technology is often clouded, and as the article states, Catholics know what is forbidden but know little about what is allowed or possible.

Are children and young people given enough correct information even to know about the church's stance on reproductive technologies, even when we now have so much more information than ever?

ROSEMARY KEENAN
Perth, Australia

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Always Enough; Heavenly Bread

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JULY 26, 2009

Readings: 2 Kgs 4:42–44; Ps 145:10–18; Eph 4:1–6; Jn 6:1–15

"They shall eat and there shall be some left over" (2 Kgs 4:43)

There are more hungry people in the world than ever before, a fact reported by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization at its meeting in June. One-sixth of the planet's population is going hungry. The hardest hit live in the developing world: 642 million people are malnourished in Asia and the Pacific. But developed countries are not immune; some 15 million go wanting in the richest countries of the world. This hunger crisis is not due to poor harvests and insufficient food. The global economic slowdown, coupled with persistently high food prices, has pushed some 100 million more people into chronic hunger and poverty this year. During the Angelus address on the feast of Corpus Christ, June 14, Pope Benedict XVI decried this "absolutely unacceptable situation." Today's readings are both challenging and comforting in light of the present food crisis.

The readings tell of two extraordinary acts of feeding hungry crowds, one by Elisha and one by Jesus. In the first, a man brings 20 loaves of barley bread as "first fruits" to Elisha. The setting is likely a shrine, and the bread is intended to be offered to God or placed as showbread, to be eaten later by the temple functionaries. The offering of first fruits, the best of the harvest, was a way to express gratitude to God and ask God's blessing on the remainder. It is surprising that Elisha tells the man offering the bread to give it to the people to eat instead. Only an extraordinary situation of hunger would demand such an action. Elisha's servant does not object, but worries that there will still not be enough to feed 100 people. Quoting an unknown saying, Elisha insists there will be enough and even some left over. And there is.

ART: TAD DUNNE

A similar story is told in the Gospel, but Jesus faces 5,000 hungry people. He and the disciples explore possible solutions. They could buy food, but where would they find a sufficient stock? Even if they could find it, they do not have enough money for the purchase. There is a boy with five loaves and two fish, but the disciples reason: What good are these for so many? They are fixated on the enormity of the need and the scarcity of the resources.

At Jesus' urging, they entrust to him the boy's loaves and fishes. He instructs them to invite the people into a position of trust and receptivity to God's gracious care. Reclining on the grass is evocative of Psalm 23, which expresses trust in God who leads the people to green pastures and provides for all their needs. Taking the loaves and giving thanks, Jesus rejoices in the abundance that God has given and distributes the bread to all until they are satisfied. He then directs the disciples to gather the leftovers, which fill 12 baskets.

Both readings urge us to take extraordinary actions to meet an urgent need. Global efforts to eradicate hunger can begin with one courageous boy willing to relinquish his few loaves and fishes, or one man making an offering to God, willing to let his gift be redirected to the people and to trust that in God's hands there will be enough for all. Jesus reorients his disciples away from the inscrutable problem of scarcity and instead gives thanks for the abundance of God's provision. The resources to feed all, and for all to be satisfied, lie within the community. Jesus' careful attention to the fragments left over also directs us to prevent wastefulness. Through such extraordinary responses to divine abundance, God is able to "satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Ps 145:16).

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Give thanks to God for all the abundance you have received.
- How is the Spirit prompting you to respond to this abundance?
- Recall a time when you were led by God to let go of something familiar and risk a new future. How did you experience God's providence?
- How do you feed on "food that endures to eternal life"?

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., *is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill.*

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), AUG. 2, 2009

Readings: Ex 16:2 ff.; Ps 78:3 ff.; Eph 4:17–24; Jn 6:24-35

"I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35)

"Better the devil you know than the one you don't know." Such popular wisdom reflects the reluctance of most people to change, even when a current situation is difficult. It is easier to hang on to what is, using familiar coping mechanisms, than it is to risk something new that might result in even greater difficulties. Such is the complaint of the Israelites to Moses in the first reading. They would rather have stayed enslaved in Egypt, with all the suffering that entailed, than risk the freedom into which God was leading them, a freedom that brought a whole new set of challenges.

One challenge concerned food. For those who migrate from one land to another, one of the hardest changes is to eat the food of another culture. One longs for familiarity, the "comfort food" from home.

God is not indifferent to the plight of the Israelites. Morning and evening God provides plenty of manna and quail. But the manna is completely unfamiliar to the Israelites. "What is this?" they ask. Moses tells them, "This is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat." It may have filled them physically, but it does not seem to have satisfied them on other levels. God's providence never fails, but it does not always come in the way we want or expect.

In the Gospel, Jesus invites the crowd to shift their expectations from outward signs to inner transformation. He has just fed a hungry crowd of 5,000 with five barley loaves and two fish, yet they ask him for a sign so they may see and believe. They are looking right at the very Bread of Life, but they do not see him as such. Jesus tells them that the same God who provided for their ancestors in the desert is the one who fed the crowd and who gives life to the world. To come to Jesus and believe in him requires letting go of familiar habits, like filling up on "food that perishes," and allowing him to give "food that endures for eternal life."

Grazing on junk food or trying to satisfy our spiritual hungers with constant noise and busyness are some contemporary "devils" we know. What would happen if we carved out an inner emptiness to let the Bread of Life satisfy our deepest hungers and thirsts?

Risking an unknown future, the Israelites crossed the desert and entered the land of freedom to which God led them through Moses. The crowd in the Gospel crossed the Sea of Galilee, opening themselves to the possibility of being filled forever by the one who would also entrust to them the "work of God" to feed others and give "life to the world." This mission can take us into strange territory, where we risk the familiar and taste the "bread" or rice or tortillas of others. Step by step, we turn from looking for the external "signs" toward seeking to become one with the Bread of Life, who fills us to the full.

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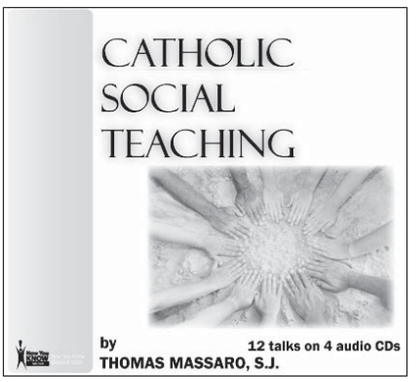

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Thomas Massaro, S.J., Ph.D. is Professor at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. His research addresses the moral evaluation of American policies, including foreign policy, anti-poverty efforts and globalization. He is author of many articles and five books, including: *Catholic Social Teaching and United States Welfare Reform*, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, and *Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War.*

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