

America

APRIL 2, 2018

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

Models of American Faith

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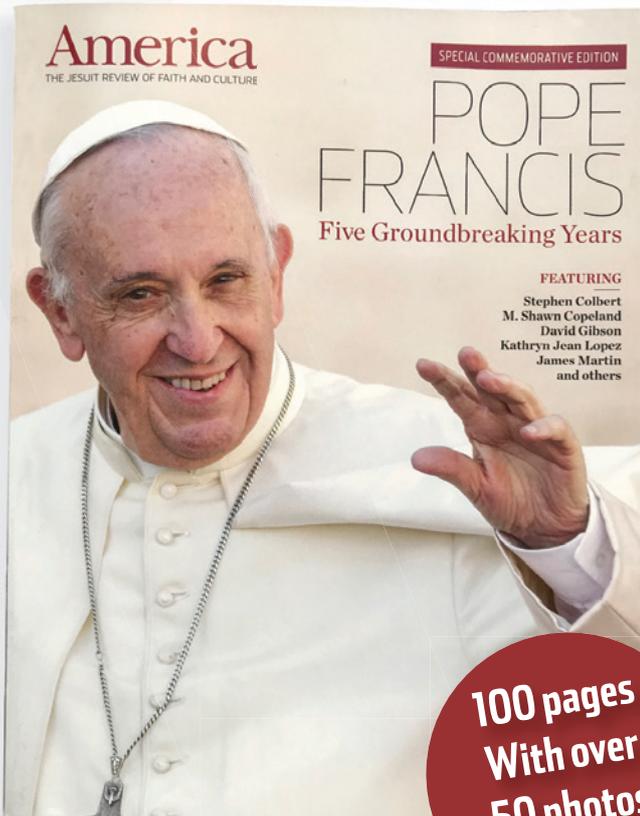
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The Uniform States of America

In his last public homily before ascending the throne of St. Peter, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger uttered what is arguably his most famous phrase: “We are building a dictatorship of relativism,” he said, “that does not recognize anything as definitive.” This phrase caught on and became a rallying cry for the church’s public witness in the Benedict moment.

Far be it from me to quibble with a thesis of one of the greatest Christian thinkers of our time, but reading the present issue of **America** prompted me to revisit this famous homily and question the accuracy of its central claim. In fairness, then-Cardinal Ratzinger was speaking mainly about the postconciliar trajectory of ecclesial thought. But as a way of understanding what is happening in our contemporary politics, I fear it misses the mark, mainly because the situation appears worse than what he describes.

By “dictatorship of relativism” I take Cardinal Ratzinger to mean a sociopolitical movement that refuses to recognize an ultimate objective reality called “the truth.” Although this is a coherent theoretical concept, the closer we get to the ground the more it seems that the battles being waged in the public square are not so much about whether ultimate truths exist, but which absolute “truths” will govern public affairs. In that sense, Pope Francis’ warnings about the dangers of ideology and “ideological colonization” appear more relevant.

On the last page of the present issue, Thomas Rosica, C.S.B., of the Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation in Canada, describes how the government in that country has changed its requirements for groups seeking federal funding in its summer jobs program, insist-

ing that they not oppose “human rights,” including reproductive rights. This is hardly surprising. Justin Trudeau, the current prime minister of Canada, has made it clear that access to abortion is, in his judgment, a fundamental human right. He has even silenced members of his own political party who disagree.

Meanwhile, just south of the Canadian border, in Vermont, Michael O’Loughlin reports that the state’s Catholic schools are prohibited from access to newly available public funds simply because they are religious schools. Professor Rick Garnett of the University of Notre Dame correctly characterizes the conflict: “It’s about whether a generally available and entirely ‘secular’ benefit should be withheld simply as a penalty” for a faith-based school.

The main characters in both of these stories are making truth claims. Mr. Trudeau’s claim is absolute: that it is so objectively obvious that access to abortion is a human right that people who think differently should not be permitted to voice their opinions and should not have access to public funds of any kind if they do so. This is the case, in his judgment, regardless of whether your opinion derives from religious faith or the use of reason alone. We must acknowledge that this is very different from how people thought and spoke about this issue just a few years ago. Then the government was often said to be officially agnostic on the morality of abortion and the competing truth claims involved. Now, Mr. Trudeau says, the government has settled those claims in favor of one party and asserts that the government is therefore justified, not merely in enforcing a minimal standard of abortion access, but in positively promot-

ing access to abortion as a moral good.

And while the case in Vermont might appear to be a straightforward church-state question, it is more nefarious than that. True, many U.S. states prohibit public funds for parochial schools. Such prohibitions were enacted a century ago by Protestant legislators, chiefly to penalize rival Catholic schools. That much is clear from the historical record. But while that fight was at its heart about competing religious conceptions of the one, true God, the present fight in Vermont is about whether religion has any place in public life at all. Now the opponents of faith-based schools are saying, by implication, that there are truths, we hold them, and religion is not only not one of the avenues of approach to those truths, but an enemy of them.

What we have, then, is not a dictatorship of relativism in which there is no such thing as truth, but a far more dangerous dictatorship of positivism, that truth only exists independently of faith and is brought into existence through brute legal force. We are no longer considering, says Cathleen Kaveny, what we owe people who think differently. “Nobody’s asking that, and you reap what you sow.”

The result of this is an ideological uniformity imposed and policed by the state, a situation in which minorities, religious or otherwise, are always the most adversely affected. For as Mr. Trudeau’s father and predecessor as prime minister once said: “A society which emphasizes uniformity is one which creates intolerance and hate.”

Matt Malone, S.J.
twitter: @americaeditor.



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Afghan children play on the remains of a Soviet tank on the outskirts of Kabul, March 4. Cover: AP composition

AP Photo/Rahmat Gul

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What does ethical eating mean to you?

In making decisions about what to eat, respondents to an informal survey told **America** that the most important factor was their own health. Marilyn Welker of Indianapolis said: “What do I have available to me that will support good health, still taste good and be affordable?”

The environment was the second most important factor for respondents, and this concern was repeatedly linked to health. For Matthew Tate of Prince Frederick, Md., ethical eating is “an ever-evolving fusion of care for health and the environment, usually fighting against cost.” Laurie Richlovsky of Oxford, Miss., also connected health and environmental concerns: “I try to choose food that fits a healthy balanced diet and is produced sustainably.”

Many readers also linked the environment to the third most cited factor in making decisions about food: animal rights and the humane treatment of animals. Amy Sarah LaMena of Schenectady, N.Y., noted, “I believe having stewardship over the earth means we have to engage in less destructive, dangerous, and cruel practices.”

For some readers, prioritizing the treatment of animals meant a vegan or vegetarian diet. “I am Catholic. I believe

that all life is sacred. Therefore, I am vegan,” wrote Emily Flagstad of St. Paul, Minn.

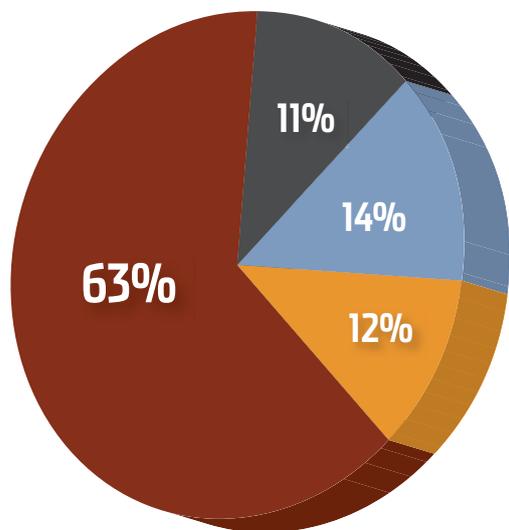
Other readers interpreted concern for animals to mean reduced consumption of meat and what they call the humane treatment of animals. M. Murray of Sandusky, Ohio, wrote, “We purchase only organic, lean chicken as well as fish. We do not purchase beef due to the effects on the environment, the abuse of animals and health concerns.” Others wrote that occasional hunting (but not trophy hunting) can cultivate a respectful relationship with nature, promote sustainability and provide food for a family.

After health, the environment and the treatment of animals, cost was cited by many respondents as an important consideration in choosing what to eat. Jodith Allen of Custer, Wash., said: “My decisions are based almost entirely on cost and ease of preparation. I’m disabled (I have chronic fatigue) and am on a fixed income. My diet consists almost entirely of what I can easily microwave.”

Anthony Buccitelli of Lancaster, Pa., spoke for many respondents when he wrote: “I don’t have the luxury of eating completely in line with my ethics because of cost.”

What are your eating habits?

■ Omnivore (eats everything)	63%
■ Pescatarian (no meat, but allows fish and shellfish)	11%
■ Vegan (no dairy, no meat, no other animal products)	14%
■ Vegetarian (no meat)	12%



What factors are at play in your decisions about what to eat?

1. Health



2. The environment



3. Treatment of animals



4. Cost



5. Labor conditions



“I want healthy and morally responsible foods, but unfortunately they are not as available or affordable as foods which do not follow these principles.”

Luis Ramos, Louisville, Tenn.

These results are based on reader responses to a poll promoted on Facebook, Twitter and in our email newsletter. Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Neither Quick Nor Easy

Re “Life After Suicide,” by Ashley McKinless (3/19): This is an excellent article about what sounds like an excellent and still much-needed program. Our family certainly could have used a program like Loving Outreach for Survivors of Suicide back in 1991, when our mother walked into the tidal bay at the bottom of our street in the middle of a cold November night. It has taken us a very long time to come to some sort of peace with her death. We eventually got there, but it was neither quick nor easy. We can and do talk about her death now, trying to chip away at the stigma of suicide that remains pervasive even today.

Paula Butturini

Online Comment

Grief and Guilt

As a chaplain for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, I find suicide is a pervasive part of my work, both with those who have attempted it and with the families and friends of those who completed suicide. I am gratified to see that there are people in the church who understand the intense grief, guilt and shame people feel and who are able to respond compassionately and pastorally.

Charles Barnes

Online Comment

Hear the Children

Re “From the Ashes” (Our Take, 3/19): God bless the kids of Parkland, Fla. May their voices be heard.

Edward Graff

Online Comment

30-Second Homilies

Re “Lent’s Honest Light,” by Richard Barry (3/19): At one point in my life, I was attending Mass each Tuesday at our local Catholic high school. It began at 7:15 a.m. and was absolutely over in less than 20 minutes. The priest, who was the school’s chaplain, had a wonderful gift for making a striking homily in—I kid you not—two or three sentences. I still remember and meditate on many of those 30-second homilies. If only all priests had that gift.

Ann Brashear

Online Comment

Improving Prayer

Thanks to Mr. Barry for sharing his Lenten experience. As a Catholic sister who has celebrated over 50 years of religious life, I am still blindsided by the lack of luster in my own prayer. Attendance at daily liturgies and reflection time are what I need and want to do to “improve my performance.”

Myrtle E. Keller

Online Comment

A Feature, Not a Bug

Re “Fixing Our Broken Political System,” by Kyle Gautreau (3/19): Our political system was never designed to function smoothly. Monarchies, dictatorships and autocracies function smoothly.

Stefan Svilich

Online Comment

Blood Brothers

Re “Our Canine Kin,” by Antonio De Loera-Brust (3/19): *American Wolf*, by Nate Blakeslee, looks interesting. As to wolves and humans being alike, an argument could be made that we co-evolved with dogs (who came from wolves), which would make us some kind of blood brothers.

Mark Chandler

Online Comment

Unknown Living

Re “Awaiting Morning in Moundville,” by John Miller (2/19): The lead picture in the article is the northern end of the penitentiary in Moundville, W.Va., as seen from the top of the Mound. I saw this as an unknowing tribute by the writer to one of Moundville’s most famous citizens, the American novelist Davis Grubb. Mr. Grubb left the town at an early age, and like Wheeling’s great Keith Maillard, he never stopped writing about his hometown. The line I love most from Mr. Grubb is the one that I used when I argued one of the early prisoner rights cases before the West Virginia Supreme Court: “All visitors to Moundville are shown two sights: an ancient Adena burial mound and the West Virginia State Penitentiary. One is the burial place of the unknown dead. The other is the burial place of the unknown living.”

H. John Rogers

New Martinsville, W.Va.

Equal Rights, Unequally Threatened

After the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968, the editors of **America** asked: “Will this prophet be heard in death as he was not heard in life? Will the martyr accomplish by his blood what he could not achieve by his words?”

The original meaning of the Greek word *martyr* is “witness,” taken in the Christian sense to mean one who witnesses to the faith with one’s own blood. Dr. King’s witness was not secular or politically partisan, but one profoundly inspired by his conviction that the biblical demand for justice was as pertinent in our day as in the days of the ancient prophets.

In the weeks that followed Dr. King’s assassination, religious leaders penned an interfaith statement to President Lyndon B. Johnson and the U.S. Congress, calling for concrete action to continue the work of the civil rights movement and to “lift up the burden of the poor and oppressed in our land.”

Was Martin Luther King Jr. heard?

On the one hand, interfaith and ecumenical groups have made great strides in the fight against poverty and racism. Groups like Circle of Protection bring together a broad coalition of Christians to oppose budget cuts that would gut federal programs like food stamps and Medicaid and disproportionately harm people of color. People of every faith joined voices to condemn the vile racism laid bare at last summer’s white supremacy rally in Charlottesville, Va. The tenets of social justice are now firmly ensconced in the religious educational curricula of innumerable schools.

But it is impossible to ignore the

bleak economic and social realities that many African-Americans and members of other racial minority groups still face. Decades after the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and the War on Poverty, Americans of color continue to face social and economic inequality and a widespread lack of opportunity. In the United States, if you own a home, if you went to college, if your economic assets exceed your liabilities, if you have a positive view of law enforcement, you most likely are white.

Those realities are accompanied by a disturbing complacency in mainstream political and cultural discourse. The insidious notion that all Americans now enjoy equal treatment under the law or that our individual outcomes (economically, politically, socially) unfold independently of any legacy of racism and discrimination infects everything from Supreme Court decisions to tax policies that freeze economic inequality.

The rhetoric, from the president all the way down to local sheriffs, often blames ethnic minorities for social and health problems that are actually exacerbated by racially discriminatory policies. We as a nation seem more and more willing to see the racist structures of the past as past, when in fact they remain present today throughout the nation.

As we honor Martin Luther King Jr. for his witness in the struggle for equal rights, we do well to remind ourselves that the very concept of equal rights is robbed of substance in the face of the reality that some people’s equal rights in this country are still threatened.

Syria Bereft

The trauma of innocent children is only the most obvious horror emerging out of the conflict zones around eastern Ghouta and Afrin in Syria. Perhaps the gravest threat is the growing possibility that miscalculation or misadventure will bring U.S. and Russian forces into direct conflict, transforming this regional nightmare into a global calamity. Distracted by its own existential crisis, the Trump administration has adopted a reactive posture. A credible plan either to complete the campaign against ISIS or contribute to ending the civil war in Syria seems beyond its reach.

At the United Nations in March, the U.S. ambassador, Nikki Haley, had strong words for her Syrian and Russian counterparts, but it is impossible to know how seriously to take the paper-rattling in New York as the mortars and missiles continue to fall over Syria.

The Trump administration retains some independent capacity to act. It could reconsider its shortsighted and inhuman restrictions on refugee resettlement, thereby signaling to the Syrian people that they are not completely bereft of hope. It could also begin military preparations for a defensible humanitarian relief effort for the thousands of families under siege.

And despite its abject failure to protect Syria’s noncombatants, the United Nations may yet bypass the dysfunction within its Security Council to force some meaningful action toward establishing a cease-fire. These are wan hopes, however, and Syria remains a place with little room for such.

Dig That Tunnel

A new rail tunnel between New York City and New Jersey is once again in jeopardy. Chris Christie, who had hoped to run for president as a fiscal conservative, killed the project in 2010 when he was governor of New Jersey. Now President Trump is reportedly trying to block federal spending on the \$30 billion tunnel, which is needed to replace two passageways that are more than a century old and damaged by flooding.

Mr. Trump campaigned as uniquely qualified to improve the infrastructure of the United States, but he has so far made little discernible progress in this area, and the recent deadly collapse of a pedestrian bridge in Miami only reminds us of the possible costs of not taking this issue seriously. His administration's infrastructure plan, released in February, includes only \$200 billion in federal spending, with \$1.3 trillion assigned to state and local governments, plus private investors. This ratio does not recognize the importance to the national economy of reliably conveying goods and passengers across state lines. A third rail tunnel between New York and New Jersey is not a local project. It will help connect the nation's largest metropolitan area to several other major cities, including the capital of the United States.

Local responsibility is preferable in many areas of public policy, but ensuring reliable long-distance transportation is not one of them.

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Where are the millennial Catholic activists?

Looking back on the Catholic Day of Action to Protect Dreamers on Feb. 27—when dozens of Catholics, many of them members of religious orders, were arrested while demonstrating in support of undocumented young adults brought to the United States as children—it was difficult for me not to notice something striking: the average age of the protesters.

Perhaps it was because so many of the photos were taken from above, capturing the gray-haired heads of protesters flanked by police officers. But seeing older sisters arrested while advocating for undocumented people my age, in their early 20s, shocked me. Where were the Catholic 20-somethings who should have been protesting for our peers? Why is the face of Catholic activism today so often that of a baby boomer?

I have asked myself this repeatedly as I have torn through books and documentaries about Catholic social justice leaders like Daniel Berrigan, S.J., Dorothy Day, Jean Vanier and Madeleine Delbr el. I see the spirit of these men and women in myself and my friends: We are idealistic, energetic and passionate about the way our faith calls us to work communally for justice and peace. But though young Catholics have breathed new life into traditions like the Latin Mass, when I meet members of Catholic activist groups like Pax Christi or bring friends to Friday night meetings at the Catholic Worker, we are often the only people under 60.

We cannot deny the social justice progress that Catholic activists now in their 60s and 70s brought about. Catholic boomers peacefully protested segregation and the Vietnam War. After *Roe v. Wade*, some of the same activists directed their efforts toward

the fight against abortion. But millennials need to acknowledge that our parents' generation will not be able to lead the way forever.

Many of us have already had a taste of activism at the March for Life. Hundreds of thousands of Catholic students have demonstrated in Washington, D.C., with Catholic high schools, youth groups and colleges. But after graduation, few of us return to the annual march, and our activism within the church rarely includes the antiwar, antipoverty and antiracism work that previous generations of Catholics championed.

Millennials are equipped to organize in a way that past generations were not, thanks to social media—as we have seen in movements like Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter and the Women's March. Young Catholics might ask, "Why bother organizing with fellow Catholics when you can simply be a Catholic in a secular social justice movement?"

Catholic peace and justice groups are important for several reasons. First, these groups continue the strong tradition of U.S. Catholics working for justice that dates back to the Knights of Labor, who fought for workers' rights as the United States was undergoing industrialization after the Civil War. Advocating for social justice—a term coined by an Italian Jesuit in the 1840s—is a Catholic tradition that is vital for us to carry on in a world marred by injustice.

Second, Catholic groups enable us to advocate without being forced to downplay or compromise our beliefs. For example, in 2017 the Women's March alienated Catholic women by declaring that access to abortion was one of the "unity principles" that its marchers stood for. Explicitly Catholic advocacy groups will, of course, face difficult

decisions about who they are willing to work with in order to advance a cause. But they can uphold and integrate Catholic teachings in their work in a way that can be difficult for individuals who join non-Catholic organizations.

Perhaps most important, Catholic activism can be a powerful evangelization tool. Groups that advocate for Catholic social teaching can reach people by advocating for the issues that they already care about and inviting them into the full Catholic understanding of justice. Some critics view the church today as hypocritical or sexist, but the witness of Catholic activists fighting for a living wage, paid family leave or an end to mass incarceration can prove that we practice the justice we preach. We can show that we oppose all killing, not just abortion, by working to end the death penalty and the wars the United States has fought for our entire adult lives. Catholic groups can also provide a sense of intentional community to counter the growing trend of social isolation in this country.

As Generation Z, the oldest of whom are now 19, begins to find its political voice, millennial Catholics ought to provide an example of what faith-based activism looks like in a digitally saturated world. Teens today are less Catholic and less religious than previous generations, which means it will be even more important for the church to bring the faith out of the sanctuary and into the streets. If millennials do not step into leadership roles in Catholic justice movements, then we risk denying the next generation the living examples of Catholic activism that they deserve.

Colleen Dulle is an O'Hare fellow at America.

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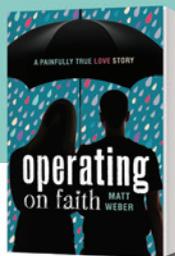


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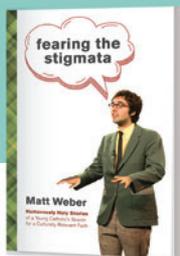


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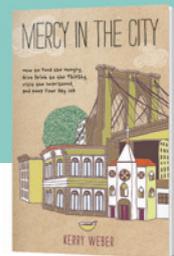


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IN VERMONT, THE LATEST CLASH OVER PUBLIC MONEY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

By Michael J. O'Loughlin

When Brian Senecal and his daughter Savana heard about a program that provides state-funded vouchers for juniors and seniors to take classes at Vermont colleges and universities, they were intrigued. But during an information session, Mr. Senecal learned that the program was not an option for his family because his daughter was a student at Rice Memorial High School in Burlington, one of 13 Catholic schools serving 2,300 students in Vermont.

"I can't believe that Vermont would do that. That's discriminatory," Mr. Senecal, in a recent interview with **America**, recalled thinking after the meeting.

In 2013 the Vermont Legislature created the dual enrollment program to improve educational opportunities in

the state and to try to keep more young adults in Vermont by getting them acquainted with some of the state's colleges and universities before they graduate from high school. While the vast majority of Vermont students are eligible for the vouchers, which pay the full cost of up to two college classes, students who attend religious and other private schools are not.

Mr. Senecal and other supporters of efforts to broaden the program argue that parents who send their children to private school still pay their share of taxes that support public schools—without putting a strain on the public system. Now three state senators, including two Democrats, have sponsored legislation that would allow private schools, in-

cluding Rice Memorial, to participate in the program.

Opponents argue that amending the law to include nonpublic students is not permissible under Vermont's constitution.

Rick Garnett, a law professor at the University of Notre Dame and the director of the university's Program on Church, State & Society, disagrees. "The 'separation of church and state' is an important aspect of the American tradition, but this distinction does not require and should not even permit blatant discrimination against students simply because they and their families choose qualified religious schools for their education," he wrote in an email to **America**.

"This is not a debate about whether public funds in Vermont should be used to pay for religious instruction or to support religious schools," he said. "It is, instead, about whether a generally available and entirely 'secular' benefit should be withheld simply as a penalty for exercising the constitutional right to choose a faith-based school."

The battle in Vermont is just the latest in a series of confrontations about public money mixing with Catholic institutions. Earlier this year in Chicago, a network of Catholic hospitals sought a tax break, valued at about \$5.6 million, on its new headquarters in exchange for its pledge to spend more than \$15 million to build health care facilities in underserved areas.

While the tax break was supported by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the N.A.A.C.P. and more than a dozen aldermen from areas where the new facilities would be built, Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois and at least a couple of members of the city council opposed the measure because of the church's prohibition on abortion and sterilization.

The City Council's finance committee ended up passing the tax break 13 to 7.

More recently, the L.G.B.T. group Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and a number of federal agencies on behalf of a married lesbian couple who say they were told by a Texas Catholic Charities agency that they could not be foster parents to refugees because they did not "mirror the Holy Family."

The lawsuit says that the agency stopped communicating with the women, Fatma Marouf and Bryn Esplin, after it discovered they were married. It argues that the

This is a predictable and very regrettable consequence of the culture wars and the ways they've been waged on both sides. 

U.S.C.C.B., one of the nation's largest settlers of refugees, and its affiliates "discriminate against same-sex spouses, but also effectively erase the non-Catholic identities and beliefs of many of the unaccompanied refugee children for which they are responsible."

A statement from Bishop Michael Olson and the Texas Catholic Conference said there are other ways for parents like those suing the bishops to become foster parents.

"It would be tragic if Catholic Charities were not able to provide this help, in accordance with the Gospel values and family, assistance that is so essential to these children, who are vulnerable to being mistreated as meaningless in society," the bishop said.

Cathleen Kaveny, who holds dual appointments in the schools of law and theology at Boston College, said that in conflict between secular and faith groups the losers are often those most in need.

"This is a predictable and very regrettable consequence of the culture wars and the ways they've been waged on both sides," Ms. Kaveny told **America**.

She said both sides have given up trying to negotiate relating to one another in a pluralistic society, forgoing questions like: "How do we exercise our religious liberty properly in a pluralistic society? What do we owe people who think differently from us?"

"Nobody's asking that, and you reap what you sow," she said. "People of good will on both sides, who want to try to find a way to live together respectfully—and that's most people—have lost. When any kind of social services is threatened, then the vulnerable who are served lose, and more generally, vulnerable populations lose."

Michael J. O'Loughlin, *national correspondent*.
Twitter: @MikeOLoughlin.

When your peers leave the pews

Younger Americans are leaving the Catholic Church and turning away from religious institutions altogether. That is the simplistic way of reporting the results of several major surveys, but some data also suggests that this trend is not irreversible.

The study “Going, Going, Gone,” released earlier this year by St. Mary’s Press and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, focused on young adults who were raised Catholic but have left the church. A major subgroup are the “drifters,” who do not report poor experiences or ideological dissent from the church but simply find no value in faith.

As the authors write, “A contributing factor in drifting away from faith is the lack of companions on the spiritual journey” and an absence of “peer or adult support.” This lack of support shows up in some of the report’s findings: Most former Catholics had attended Mass no more than a few times a year, and only about one-third had received the sacrament of confirmation (compared with more than two-thirds of young adults who still identify as Catholic). A large majority stopped identifying as Catholic between the ages of 10 and 17, which means they “drifted away” before entering college or the workplace.

Other recent polls have shown skepticism toward religion and the moral necessity of believing in God among millennials and members of Generation Z (born after 1999). The Barna Group released survey results in January with the sensationalist headline “Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z,” but only 13 percent of Generation Z proponents actually chose the atheism label, with 66 percent identifying with Catholicism or another religion.

We do not know yet whether youthful alienation from religion is permanent. Even Generation Z members may return to the pews when they start forming families, but this could be a more difficult return if they do not perceive other young adults joining them.

Robert David Sullivan, *associate editor*.

FALLING AWAY...FOREVER?

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU STOP IDENTIFYING AS CATHOLIC?

Under age 5	5%
5 to 9	18%
10 to 12	24%
13 to 17	39%
18 to 20	11%
21 to 25	3%

ABOUT HOW OFTEN DID YOU ATTEND MASS WHEN YOU WERE CATHOLIC?

Rarely or never	28%
A few times a year	26%
Once or twice a month	12%
Almost every week	17%
Every week	13%
More than once a week	4%

REASON FOR LEAVING CATHOLIC CHURCH

Does not believe in God or religion	20%
Family (e.g., parents left church)	16%
Changed to another religion	15%
General opposition to religious institutions	11%
Opposition to specific church teachings	8%
Church/parish not welcoming	3%
Clergy sexual abuse crisis	2%
Other	25%

WHO COMPLETED CONFIRMATION?

68% of young adults who still identify as Catholic
33% of young adults who have left the church

YOUNG ADULTS (15-25) WHO ARE NO LONGER CATHOLIC ARE:

No religious affiliation	35%
Christian (unspecified)	29%
Atheist/agnostic	14%
Protestant	9%
Other affiliation	8%
Mormon	1%
Jewish	1%

“A BELIEF IN GOD IS NECESSARY FOR MORALITY” — YES:

Silent Generation (1928-45)	62%
Baby Boomers (1946-64)	49%
Gen X (1965-80)	43%
Millennials (1981-96)	29%

Sources: St. Mary’s/CARA survey of former Catholics between 15 and 25 (2015), with margin of error of plus or minus 6.9 percentage points; “belief in God” question from a Pew Research Center poll (2017).

In Orange County motels, a not-so-magic kingdom



Denise Lindstrom, a 49-year-old homeless woman, sits in a wheelchair in January at an encampment of homeless people on the Santa Ana River trail in Anaheim, Calif. Many of the people who had been living here were removed to area motels following a court order in February.

Motels often gouge such residents. “They charge \$20 to watch HBO for a week, \$15 for a key. The laundry is crazy expensive,” Mr. Leon said.

Jennifer Friend is the chief executive officer of Project HOPE Alliance, an agency that provides educational and other services for homeless Orange County youth. As a child, Ms. Friend spent nine months in a motel with her family; the experience was turned into a touring art installation called “214 Sq. Ft.”

“It is always more expensive to live in a motel than in an apartment,” she said. “You don’t have a full working kitchen, a full refrigerator; we had a hot plate and a crockpot. And the only place for privacy is the bathroom. Going into my teenage years I spent countless hours in the bathtub.”

Mr. Leon has been working with the homeless in Orange County for 12 years, and he said that he has never seen numbers this large. Ms. Friend points out that according to the most recent study from the National Center on Family Homelessness, there are now 2.5 million homeless children in the United States. “That’s a historic high for our nation, one in 30 children in the United States.”

In Orange County, 27 percent of children under the age of 6 live below the state poverty line; 80 percent of those children have at least one working parent.

For Ms. Friend, the greatest challenge is to make homeless children visible. She points to a scene in “The Florida Project” in which Moonee and a friend sit in a tree that has fallen over. Moonee explains that it is her favorite because although it is on its side, it is still growing.

“The tree isn’t broken or mangled or sick,” said Ms. Friend. “It’s just tipped over. All it needs is someone to see it and stand it up; then it would grow the way it was created, toward the sun.”

“Our kids are those trees,” she said. “They’re still hoping and believing that everything will work out, despite all evidence around them that it probably won’t.”

Jim McDermott, S.J., *Los Angeles correspondent.*
Twitter: @PopCulturPriest.

“The Florida Project,” a film that garnered a best-supporting-actor Oscar nomination for Willem Dafoe, depicts an overlooked reality: the growing number of families around the country who live in motels. In “Florida,” 6-year-old Moonee (Brooklyn Prince) and her mom Halley (Bria Vinaite) live at a motel near Disney World. Moonee plays with friends from nearby rooms, while her mother struggles to find ways to pay their weekly rent.

Around Southern California’s “Magic Kingdom,” many likewise rent rooms in old motels long ago bypassed by tourists for fancier digs.

Paul Leon, the chief executive of the Illumination Foundation, which provides housing, medical care and other services for people on the streets in Orange County, described the motel situation as part of the “crescendo” of collapse that more and more U.S. families are experiencing. “People are [living] on such small margins,” he said. “Two years ago they were paying \$1,300 a month here for an apartment; now it’s almost \$1,700.”

When a family loses the income they need for an apartment, a motel can seem like a good stopgap measure. Rather than scramble to find \$1,800 for monthly rent, they only have to provide a fraction of that amount a day at a time. “They think, ‘I’ll stay here a week until I get some work,’” said Mr. Leon. “But they don’t find work. And then it’s like being a drug addict. Each week you’re trying to pay that \$300. Eventually, you can’t keep up.”

Texas bishops cut ties with Texas Right to Life

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops has directed all parishes to refrain from activities with Texas Right to Life, the state's oldest and largest pro-life organization.

"Texas Right to Life often opposes the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops and has implied that the bishops do not faithfully represent Church teaching," the bishops wrote in a parish advisory on Feb. 22.

The advisory highlighted three main areas where Texas Right to Life has misrepresented Catholic positions or made misleading attacks on Texas legislators. First, the bishops cited Texas Right to Life's opposition to incremental reforms to reduce abortions like H.B. 200, a state ban on partial-birth abortion. The bishops argue that a gradualist approach is in keeping with the guidance of St. John Paul II's encyclical "The Gospel of Life."

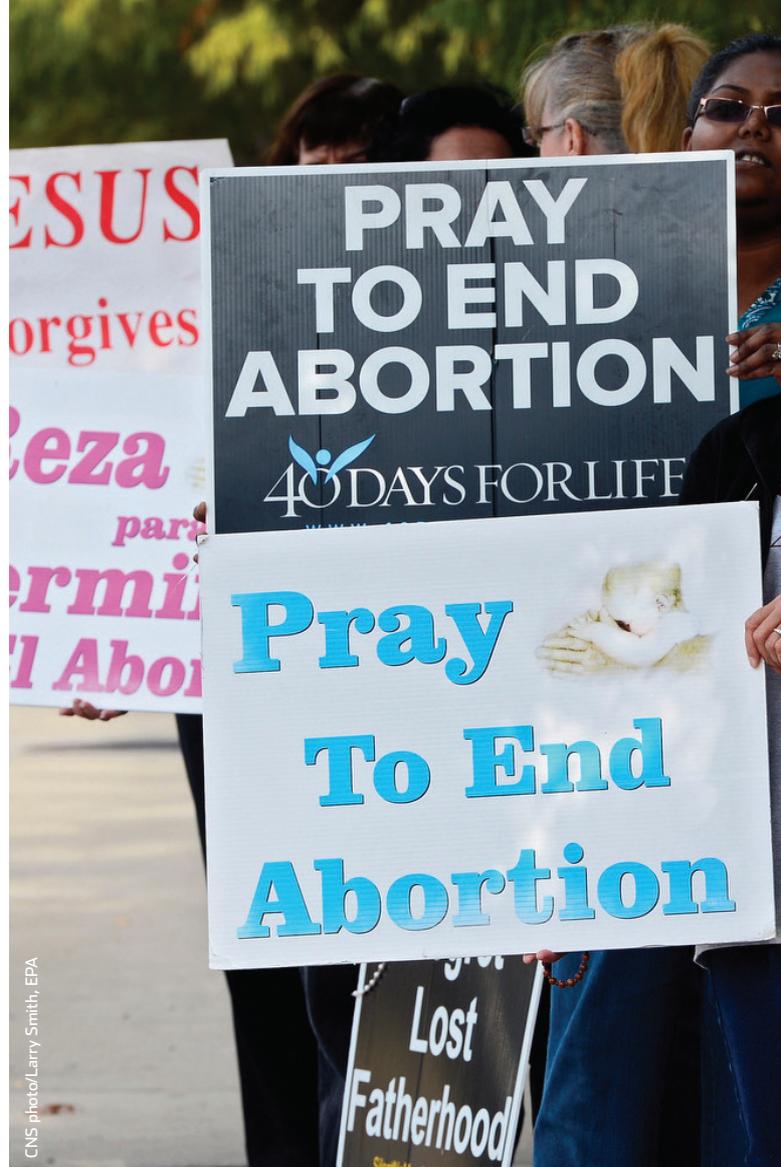
On end-of-life issues, the bishops disputed Texas Right to Life's suggestions that state legislation supported by the church would have expanded euthanasia and created "death panels." The bishops stated that "the legislation reflected the long-standing Church teaching requiring a balance of patient autonomy and the physician conscience protection."

The bishops also expressed disapproval of Texas Right to Life's voter guide, a scorecard they said unfairly assesses legislators based not on their actual pro-life record but on how strictly legislators followed recommendations from Texas Right to Life.

Responding with its own statement—which mentions neither the Texas bishops' conference by name nor the advisory—Texas Right to Life said that it was "disappointed but not surprised by recent politically motivated attacks."

Republican State Representative Matt Rinaldi, called the "pro-life whip" by Texas Right to Life during the last session of the Texas Legislature, dispatched a four-page letter to Bishop Edward Burns of Dallas, defending the pro-life organization. He speculated that lay staff and not the bishops themselves were responsible for the advisory and asked that it be rescinded.

On Twitter, Joe Pojman, the executive director of the Texas Alliance for Life, one of the statewide pro-life groups that remains consistent with the bishop's positions, called

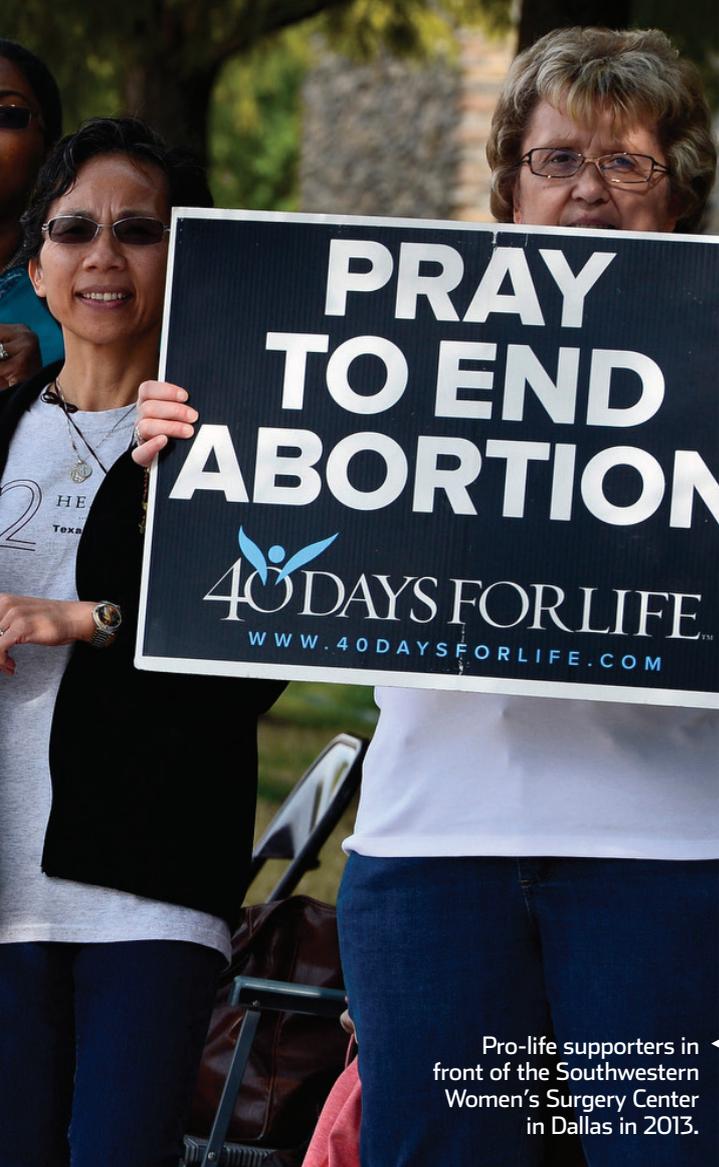


Mr. Rinaldi's letter "rife with inaccurate and misleading statements."

The disagreement highlights the rift in the Texas pro-life movement, a struggle that might be categorized as one of absolutist demands versus pragmatic and incremental gains. Politically conservative groups like Texas Right to Life are upfront about their aims to advance their broader legislative agendas and political candidates.

On the other side of the divide are the bishops' conference and pro-life groups like Texas Alliance for Life and the Texans for Life Coalition, which, according to the bishops' advisory, "engage in respectful legislative advocacy."

The divergence in Texas might also be viewed as a microcosm of the larger national debate over what it means to be pro-life, as showcased last fall when Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City was elected over Cardinal Blase Cupich, the archbishop of Chicago, as chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.



Pro-life supporters in front of the Southwestern Women's Surgery Center in Dallas in 2013.

Archbishop Naumann's approach of elevating abortion as the primary pro-life focus stood in tension with Cardinal Cupich's preference for promoting a "consistent ethic of life," which prescribes a more holistic strategy on pro-life issues—including not only abortion but also capital punishment, euthanasia, nuclear proliferation, immigration and environmental concerns, among other issues.

"As far as the bishops are concerned, parishes should continue to advocate for legislation that has a comprehensive approach to issues of human life," said Helen Osman, communications director for the Texas bishops.

"This is not a partisan issue," Mr. Pojman said. "As a pro-lifer, we must put partisanship behind us, regardless of the author of a bill or the political party that's supporting it."

Paul Stinson writes from Austin, Tex.

Five years in, Americans' love of Pope Francis remains strong



CNS photo/Vatican Media

American Catholics still loved Pope Francis as he celebrated the fifth anniversary of his election on March 13, though Catholic Republicans increasingly describe him as "too liberal" and less than half of U.S. Catholics believe he is adequately handling the clerical sexual abuse crisis.

Fifty-eight percent of U.S. Catholics say Pope Francis represents a change "for the better," but that figure is down 10 points from 2014.

According to a Pew Research Center poll released on March 6, 84 percent of U.S. Catholics hold a "favorable" view of Pope Francis, a number nearly unchanged from the early days of his pontificate. But more than half of Catholic Republicans (55 percent) say Pope Francis is "too liberal," up 32 points from 2015, and roughly a third of Catholic Republicans say Pope Francis is "naïve." Still, 79 percent of Catholic Republicans give Francis a favorable rating, compared with 89 percent of Catholic Democrats.

The report finds little evidence of a "Francis effect," at least in terms of Mass attendance or growth in the percentage of the population that identifies as Catholic. And trends in the U.S. church that began before Pope Francis continue.

The U.S. church is increasingly Hispanic (36 percent), and the number of U.S. Catholics who say they attend Mass "weekly or more" is 38 percent, according to the report, significantly higher than studies by other polling organizations that place that number at about 25 percent. On social issues, the number of Catholics who support same-sex marriage continues to grow, up to 67 percent in 2018 compared with 54 percent in 2012. U.S. Catholics remain split on abortion, with 53 percent believing it should be legal in "all or most cases."

Michael J. O'Loughlin, national correspondent.
Twitter: @MikeOLoughlin.

THE PROPHET

Martin Luther King Jr. and Black Lives Matter

By Nichole M. Flores

On this past Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, I traveled to a parish in a neighboring town to give a talk on Catholic teaching about racism in light of the racially motivated violence perpetrated on Aug. 12, 2017, in my town of Charlottesville, Va. The morning began with Mass, at which the pastor in residence offered a beautiful homily reflecting on Dr. King's compelling vision of human dignity and exhorting us to see the human person as Christ does: as irreducibly valuable and always worthy of respect. Basking in the warm glow of the homily, parishioners retreated to the church cafeteria for a conversation about race and racism. The warm glow soon gave way to frustration, as the broad range of perspectives and experiences represented in the room made for a difficult conversation. But the invocation of Dr. King's legacy in relation to the Christian faith guided our discussion, with participants of different backgrounds often gesturing to him as a beacon of hope and reconciliation in the midst of disagreement.

As a Catholic moral theologian and a woman of color living in Charlottesville, I have been invited to give similar presentations to different church, university and community groups across the country. While one audience is often radically different from the next, I find that concerns for human dignity are central to each one. I make the same theological and moral argument to each group: that racism is a grave sin against the dignity of the human person and so must be resisted in all ways possible by those of us who claim to have faith in Jesus Christ.



Photo: AP Photo



The enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., center, offers a moral common ground for working toward racial justice. Here he is on the first leg of a five-day, 50-mile march to the state capitol at Montgomery, Ala., on March 21, 1965.



The affirmation that 'black lives matter' is completely consistent with Dr. King's vision of human dignity. ●●

The issues of race and racism in the United States are often portrayed as battlefields in the larger culture wars, with partisans on each side set in their ways and unwilling to enter into community—or communion—with those who disagree with them. But throughout all my talks and presentations, I have never encountered an audience who had difficulty affirming universal human dignity as a guiding principle for thinking about race. Our admiration for Dr. King is not accidental. We are inspired by his vision of universal dignity and see it as an important guide for common life in our society. The enduring legacy of Dr. King's vision thus offers a moral common ground for working toward racial justice.

I have found that this common ground erodes quickly, however, when the discussion reaches the subject of the role of two contemporary advocates for racial justice: the Black Lives Matter network and the Movement for Black Lives coalition. I have heard from parishioners, students and community members with misgivings about the character of the modern racial justice movement. Some are concerned that it is too radical to make a positive contribution to the current conversation about race. Some disapprove of protest as a means of addressing racial injustice, arguing that it is either inconvenient or ineffective. Some go so far as to equate these groups with the Ku Klux Klan or neo-Nazis.

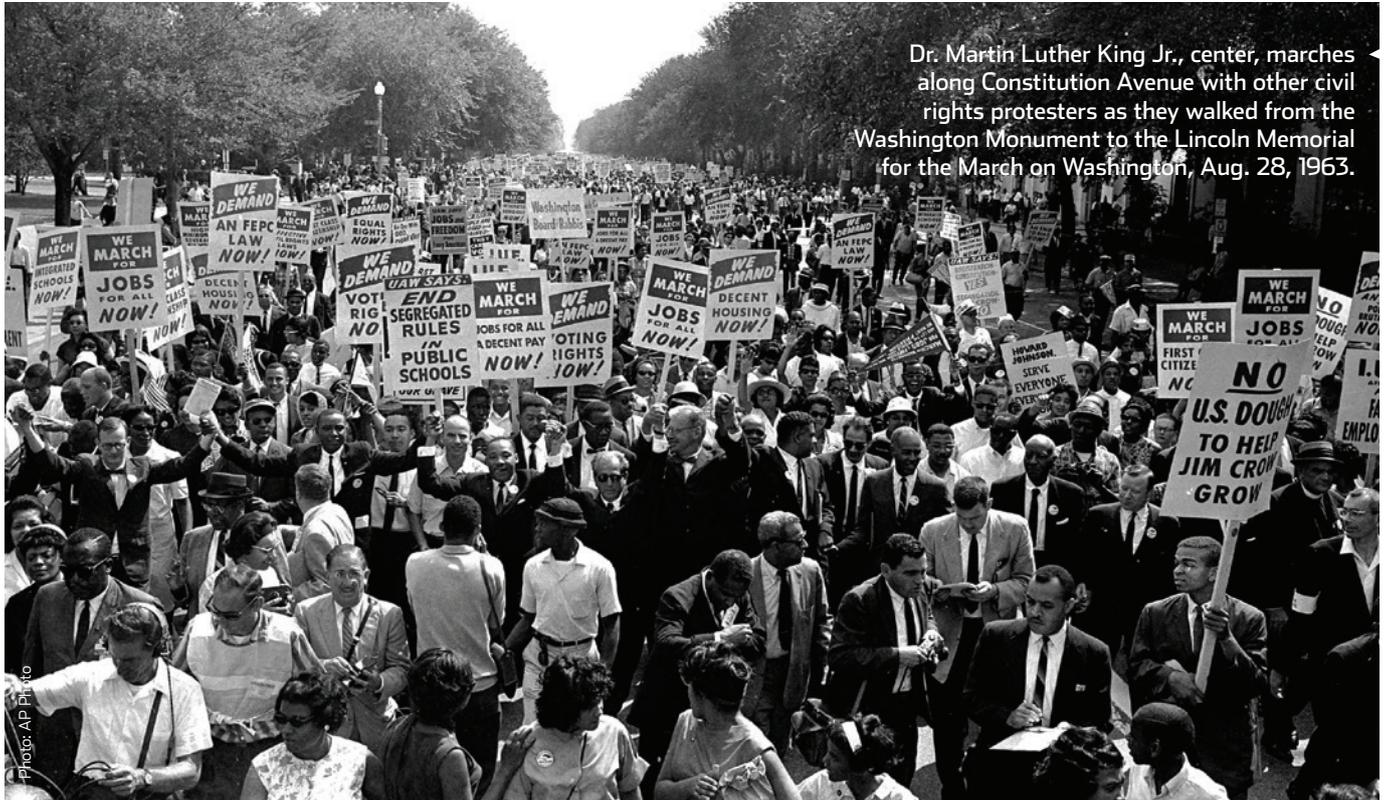
No matter how many times I hear it, this latter view of Black Lives Matter and, more broadly, the Movement for Black Lives always catches me off-guard. First, it is important to note the organizational distinctions between these phenomena: Black Lives Matter is a hierarchically structured network, while the Movement

for Black Lives is a coalition of loosely affiliated groups with different origins and leadership (including the Black Lives Matter network).

Second, they could not be more different politically or theologically from white supremacist organizations. Whereas groups like the K.K.K. formed to assert racial superiority through intimidation and violence, including the abhorrent public lynching of black people, Black Lives Matter emerged in response to the alarming rates of shooting deaths of unarmed black people. White supremacist groups are racially segregated and persecute anyone who falls outside of their definition of racial purity (Jews, Muslims and all nonwhite people); Black Lives Matter brings together people from many religions and ethnicities who seek to affirm the dignity of black life. And while I see no logical basis of comparison between these groups, I find that the affirmation that “black lives matter” is a basic theological affirmation that is completely consistent with Dr. King's vision of human dignity that we commemorate and celebrate each January.

I am aware that this is a provocative claim for many Catholics. In my travels to speak about race and racism to different parish groups, I am confronted by fellow Catholics who believe that saying “black lives matter” means that other lives do not matter. Others argue that saying “black lives matter” implies that the lives of law enforcement officers do not matter. Yet Christians who affirm universal human dignity in the abstract but cannot make the more specific affirmation that black lives matter hold the truth of the Gospel at a distance and do not allow it to make a genuine difference in our personal or social interactions. On the contrary, the affirmation of the dignity and sanctity of black lives gives flesh to the church's theological teaching on human dignity, making it real in the life of the church, the world and in our own lives.

Martin Luther King Jr. has been upheld as the paragon of racial justice activism, offering a broadly compelling account of human dignity grounded in his vision of the beloved community. But 50 years after his assassination, this vision is often manipulated or taken out of context in ways that water down the radical nature of his dream or minimize his life of protest and active solidarity that ended with the violence of a bullet aimed at silencing his message. It is this same vision of human dignity, however, that calls us to re-examine Dr. King's moral legacy for us today. Specifically, his affirmation of human dignity compels Catholics to declare that black lives matter and to align our church with an affirmation of the sanctity of black life.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., center, marches along Constitution Avenue with other civil rights protesters as they walked from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington, Aug. 28, 1963.

Dignity in a Catholic Key

For Catholics, the claim that “black lives matter” must be read within the larger context of our theological tradition. In Genesis, we see that God created humankind in his image, affirming universal human dignity (1:27). The prophets elaborate upon this theme, denouncing those who “trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and push the afflicted away” (Am 2:7). Jesus echoes Genesis and the prophets, blessing those who honor and care for “the least of these” and cursing those who do not (Mt 25).

Similarly, Catholic social teaching links our human dignity with the care for the most vulnerable. The dignity of the human person as expressed in our special concern for the oppressed is the moral cornerstone of all Catholic teachings about who we are and how we are to interact with other people and as a society. But in the United States, black women, men and children are subject to lasting racism that undermines their dignity daily. What we do to honor black lives is a measure of how deeply we hold the scriptural and theological claim of universal human dignity.

For Catholics, the virtue of solidarity is integrally linked to advocating for the lives of those who are in dis-

trepreneur, precisely because each person is a living image of God. As St. John Paul II teaches in “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,” solidarity “is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (No. 38).

If human beings are created in the image of God, then the hatred of any human person, including the hatred or mistreatment of another person based on his or her race, is an affront to that image. But this is only the baseline of a Christian response to racism. The more difficult, more demanding and more Christlike response to racism requires a positive love of and enduring solidarity with those who have been subject to racial injustice, especially those neighbors whose lives are being threatened by hatred and violence. More than a general, abstract affirmation that racism is wrong or undesirable for society, Catholic faith requires acknowledgment of specific persons and communities who are being threatened and harmed by enduring structures of anti-blackness and a resurgent cultural acceptability of racist ideas and actions. In short, Catholic faith demands that we proclaim that black lives matter.

Acknowledging the heavy cost of racism and anti-blackness is not easy, but it is a necessary step in affirming universal human dignity. ●●

Defining Dignity

The 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination occurs during a time of renewed social upheaval concerning race and racism. Martin Luther King Day in 2018 took on even greater cultural and political significance against the dramatic backdrop of simmering political tensions over immigration policy and race relations. On Jan. 12 President Trump allegedly referred to Haiti and African nations as "shithole countries" during a meeting with congressional leaders on immigration. Mere hours later, he gave a speech in celebration of the Martin Luther King holiday in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. In these remarks, the president referred to Dr. King as a "great American hero" before extolling the civil rights icon's clear-eyed view of human dignity, which "stirred the hearts of our people to recognize the dignity written in every human soul." Whether this alignment is mere coincidence or divine providence, the anniversary puts the signs of the times under a microscope in a renewed search for wisdom on how we might forge solidarity that enacts Dr. King's vision of dignity that resists racial injustice.

Many critics of Mr. Trump share concerns that his disrespectful language regarding particular countries and people is a sign of an abiding lack of respect for human dignity. This disrespect cannot simply be covered over by paeans to Dr. King's legacy. Further, the painful contradiction between referring to entire nations as piles of excrement before touting the dignity of every human person illustrates the malleability of the language of hu-

man dignity as employed in our times.

On one hand, human dignity offers an easy moral refrain that underscores a truth shared by many different religious, philosophical and political traditions. Dignity language lies at the heart of human rights discourse, where it helps us make the claim to universal rights plausible. On the other hand, dignity language is also easily scrubbed of particular moral significance. Given its broad recognition, the concept can evade ethical interrogation that is essential to specifying and clarifying its meaning.

The lack of specification means that the same dignity language can be used as a rhetorical device by opposing sides in moral conflicts, including in defense of decidedly inhumane causes such as euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. And the slippery character of dignity language means that it can be used by those who do not understand it or take it seriously.

The centrality of the defense of human dignity to Dr. King's work can be seen throughout his speeches and writings. "God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race," he said at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1961, "in the creation of a society where all men can live together as brothers, where every man will respect the dignity and the worth of human personality."

But Dr. King's words about human dignity, so prolific and poetic, have been particularly susceptible to being severed from their original context. Viewers of Super Bowl LII in early February saw a glaring example of this when an advertisement used portions of Dr. King's sermon, "The Drum Major Instinct," to sell trucks. The commercial wrenched specific passages about human excellence from Dr. King's forceful critique of rampant consumerism and the human desire to always be better than others.

This past Martin Luther King Day, a social media artist sought to recontextualize Dr. King's words in his famous "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" by placing them against the backdrop of images of protests for racial justice. One of the photos uses a photo of Dr. King being booked after an arrest along with the text of his reflection on the moral duty to disobey unjust laws, inspired by his agreement with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all." Other images depict contemporary protesters against racial injustice, including images of Black Lives Matter activists, framed by Martin Luther King Jr.'s words arguing for the necessity of

nonviolent direct action as a way of making injustice and inhumanity evident in society.

The message of the project is clear: Dr. King’s understanding of justice is rooted in a specific vision and ethical program associated with the defense of human dignity and specifically of black dignity. This defense of human dignity is grounded in the Christian faith and demands affirmation of the fundamental theological truth: that black lives matter to God.

‘A Love That Chooses Justice’

In their introduction to a recent collection of essays, *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics*, the scholars Andrew Prevot and Vincent W. Lloyd offer a clear theological statement of the fundamental sacredness of black life that has so often been denied:

Black Lives Matter. This is not only shorthand for a political program, it is also an affirmation of a truth that the world denies. Black women and

men, girls and boys, young and old, straight and queer, northern and southern, and immigrant and biracial—black humanity in all its variety—is beautiful. Is dignified. Is sacred. Loves. Is loved.

In a similar vein, the writer and speaker Austin Channing Brown travels the country preaching and teaching about racial justice and how it relates to Christian faith. Her forthcoming book, *I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*, explores her journey as a black woman living in the United States. She argues for the beauty and dignity of blackness that has yet to be fully and genuinely embraced by the church and the world. Ms. Channing Brown’s affirmation of black lives is rooted in a theological affirmation of human dignity: “We demand the right to live as fully human.” This right is based on the beauty, dignity and sanctity of black life that has so often been denied in our world.

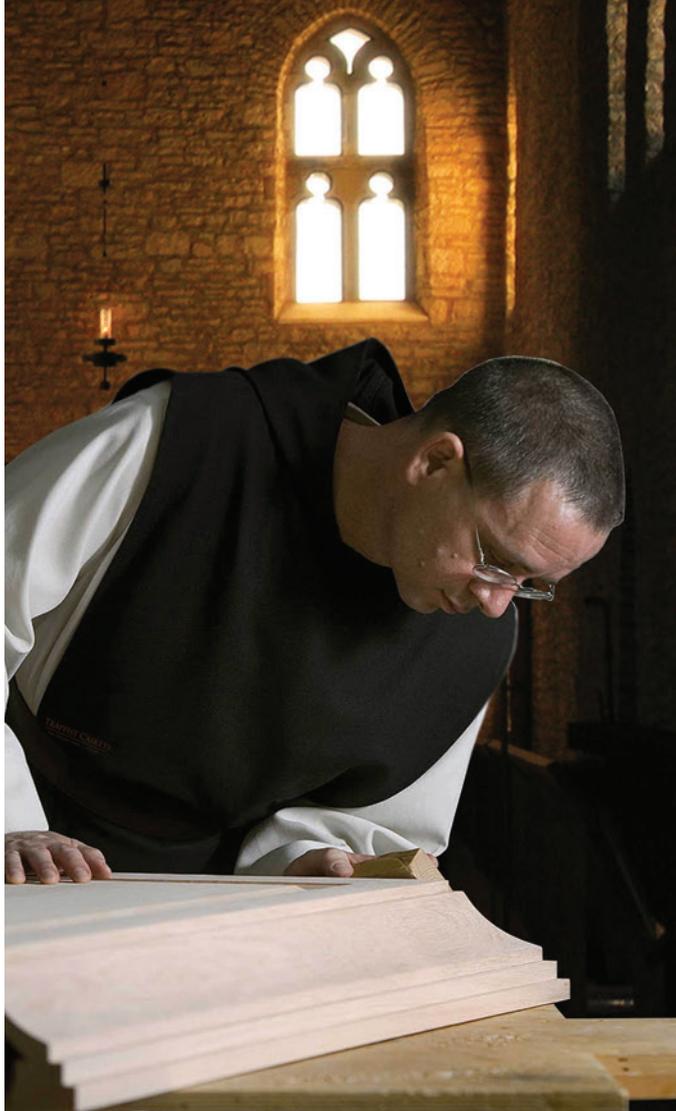
Ms. Channing Brown argues that the affirmation of universal human dignity must then lead to an abiding



Black Lives Matter activists march in Martin Luther King Jr. Day Peace Walk and Parade. The 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination occurs during a time of renewed social upheaval concerning race and racism.

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love for black lives. This is a love that moves beyond pity for another's experience of injustice toward the defense of that person's dignity. This is what Ms. Channing Brown calls "a love that chooses justice." It is a compassionate love that moves the human heart to suffer with another. It is "a love that has no tolerance for hate, no excuses for racist decisions, no contentment in the status quo." This is a love that weeps over the dead body of a black child lying in the street and proclaims, without qualification, that his life matters.

According to Ms. Channing Brown, many of us in the church do not always act as if we believe the affirmation that black lives matter is a Gospel imperative. Instead, we live in denial of the festering wounds of our past and the grotesque violence of our present.

"We live as if the ghosts of the past will snatch us if we walk through the valley of the shadow of death," she says, "So instead we walk around the valley." Acknowledging the heavy cost of racism and anti-blackness is not easy, but it is a necessary step in affirming universal human dignity.

"Is it not the work of the Holy Spirit to illuminate truth and inspire transformation?" Ms. Channing Brown asks. It is the Holy Spirit that offers hope for restored relationships that pursue justice, mercy and compassionate love and that honor the *imago Dei* at the heart of human identity.

Faithful Responses

But to affirm that black lives matter is only the first of many steps of embodying faithful witness to the unassailable truth of God-given human dignity. How can the affirmation of the sanctity of black lives direct our striving for racial justice? Are there concrete steps we can take as individuals and as a church?

Liturgy and prayer are the foundations of any Catholic response to racial injustice. The Eucharist draws the body of Christ together, making the church visible in its unity even amid profound difference. The theologian M. Shawn Copeland describes the Eucharist as a "re-mem-bering of the Body of Christ" that resists violence done to black bodies. The Eucharist is the originating act of solidarity, one in which we are united with one another through Christ.

Liturgy and prayer are also necessary for anchoring dialogue about racial injustice in love. The parish is a distinctive and crucial context for having honest and challenging discussions about racial injustice. Here participants can share stories, ask questions, express concerns and confess shortcomings. Convened in the spirit of prayer, participants are invited to humble themselves before the Lord (Jm 4:10) to have a conversation about racial injustice in the spirit of love. Some parishes have the capacity to bring together Catholics from different racial, cultural, generational and political perspectives. While other parishes may lack this kind of diversity, their dioceses can help to organize broader segments of the church to engage in this kind of dialogue.

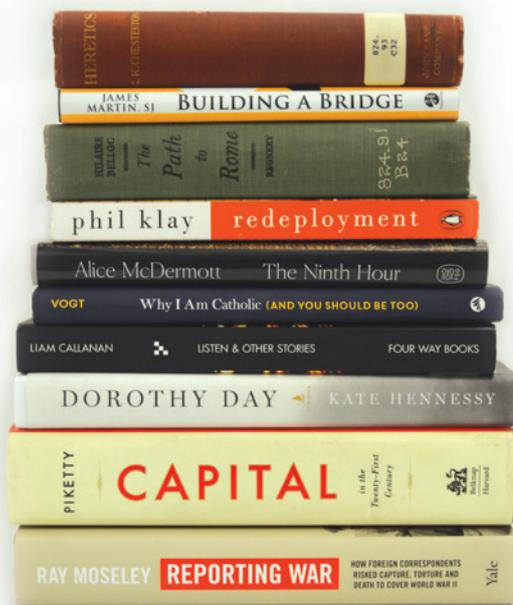
What about those times when dialogue alone proves insufficient for affirming the fundamental dignity of black lives? “Fortunately,” says Ms. Channing Brown, “dialogue isn’t the only way to participate in the creative work of justice and reconciliation.” She suggests other actions that can help us to live out our theology: reading books about racial injustice, making art that envisions a world where black women and men are treated in accord with their God-given dignity, and building communities committed to human flourishing.

Finally, Ms. Channing Brown emphasizes the centrality of public protest to affirming black dignity. Protest is the public face of the demand for dignity, expressing specific social and political claims linked to this moral affirmation. These claims include voting rights, education, employment, housing and equal treatment under the law. While some find protest to be too radical or socially disruptive, marching with those whose lives are treated as if they do not matter is a vital aspect of Christian solidarity.

We cannot forget that protest was a centerpiece of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Christian witness, the embodied manifestation of his belief that all people are created equal. He marched for the truth for which he was ultimately killed: that black lives should matter to us because they already matter to God.

Nichole M. Flores is an assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., and a contributing editor to *America*.

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THE EVANGELIST

How a Protestant pastor influenced American Catholicism

By Jon M. Sweeney

The Rev. Billy Graham, pictured here in 2000, was a famed preacher best known for his televised evangelism services. He died on Feb. 21 at his home in North Carolina at age 99.

Given his long life, it is easy to forget how young Billy Graham was when he first came into the public eye. At an age when today many adults are just feeling confident in their career and are starting a family, Mr. Graham was, at 31, leading his first major crusade in downtown Los Angeles. This event was the start of nearly seven decades of influence as a speaker, preacher and prayer leader, before Mr. Graham's death on Feb. 21, in Montreat, N.C., at the age of 99.

"Crusade" was the somewhat unfortunate name given to nightly religious services highlighted by a long sermon that included an invitation to the crowd to make a public decision to convert to faith in Christ. By luck, providence or the preacher's charism, that first big crusade was a hit and went on for eight straight weeks. It is nearly impossible to imagine the American public remaining focused on one thing for so long today.

The success was in no doubt, due in part to the influential newspaper magnate, William Randolph Hearst. Since the 1930s, Hearst had been transformed from avowed progressive to reactionary conservative—even to the point of promoting Hitler in his papers in the years leading up to World War II—and he instructed his editors to cover Mr. Graham's Los Angeles crusade of 1949 and to actively promote it. "Puff Graham," Hearst told his staff.

It did not hurt that Mr. Graham was handsome, with a thick head of wavy brown hair. He was tall and thin. He spoke commandingly and convincingly. One of his early biographers, William Martin, wrote in *A Prophet*



▶ Mr. Billy Graham developed warm relationships with prominent Catholics, including Pope John Paul II, pictured here with Mr. Graham at the Vatican in 1990.

CNS files

With Honor or: The Billy Graham Story:

Only the large expressive hands seem suited to a titan. But crowning this spindly frame is that most distinctive of heads, with the profile for which God created granite, the perpetual glowing tan, the flowing hair, the towering forehead, the square jaw, the eagle's brow and eyes, and the warm smile that has melted hearts, tamed opposition, and subdued skeptics on six continents.

Mr. Graham also had a rags-to-riches story that resonated with a generation raised during the Great Depression. Anyone who has recently watched "The Crown" on Netflix has been reminded of this. The actor Paul Sparks plays a young Graham meeting a young Queen Elizabeth in one episode during season two. At least twice, and once

through Prince Philip's sneering disdain, the script mentions the evangelist's story about having sold brushes door-to-door. Even European royalty was captivated by this thoroughly American tale.

Then, in July 1950, still just 31, the young North Carolinian evangelist met with his first U.S. president, Harry Truman. After that short meeting, Mr. Graham made a mistake that he would not repeat: He stood on the White House lawn indulging eager reporters and his own ego, telling them all about his conversation with the president. Mr. Graham even demonstrated for the photographers how he had prayed with Truman. Images of the young Mr. Graham on one knee on the White House lawn were in newspapers all around the world the following day.

Mr. Graham was puffing himself up. He made a show of what was supposed to have been kept in confidence. And he implied that President Truman had relied upon him

for spiritual counsel, which was not true. Angry about it, Mr. Truman called Mr. Graham “counterfeit.” (They later made up.)

The impression left on the public by Mr. Graham’s display did not immediately dissipate. He was compared to Elmer Gantry, the infamous title character of Sinclair Lewis’s famous novel about a cynical and conniving showman evangelist. Mr. Lewis’s novel was published in 1927, but by the time Mr. Graham reached his prominence in 1960, a film version of Elmer Gantry had become a Hollywood blockbuster, starring a handsome but slimy Burt Lancaster in the title role. This led to Lewis’s novel re-emerging into public consciousness, and for years people would yell “Elmer Gantry” at Billy Graham as a taunt.

A Life of Influence

As a young man, I revered Mr. Graham and wanted to grow up to be like him. Born and raised in Wheaton, Ill., I attended a nondenominational Baptist church steeped in evangelicalism. At 18, I enrolled at Moody Bible Institute, where my part-time job was in the publicity department writing press releases and cataloging details of the institute’s regular “prophecy conferences” around the United States.

One of the press releases I wrote that year was about Mr. Graham’s visit to Moody to speak at centennial celebrations of the founding of the school. I recall receiving the text of Mr. Graham’s talk, set in giant 24-point type, and being assigned to photocopy it. I would not have handled a saint’s relic more carefully. One year later, as a transfer student to Wheaton College, Mr. Graham’s alma mater, I found myself often in the Billy Graham Center on campus.

I lost my fervor for being like Mr. Graham at the same time I fell away from evangelicalism in general. But the man and his lifetime of work continue to fascinate me. And since I joined the Catholic Church a decade ago, I have been interested in reconsidering Mr. Graham, particularly how he defied his core audience by building bridges with Roman Catholics.

Before Billy Graham began his ministry in the 1940s, Protestants and Catholics eyed each other suspiciously, believing and behaving as if they belonged to different faiths. I grew up in such an environment, in one of the evangelical centers of middle America, even in the 1970s. My evangelical parents for a time held a Bible study in our home for Catholics and former Catholics, “witnessing” to them, encouraging them to “become Christians.” I was taught to do the same, and served for a time in the Philippines as an evangelical missionary, charged with rebaptizing

Who will be the next Billy Graham?

People have been asking this question for decades, since at least 1989, when Mr. Graham, at 70, received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Two years later he was preaching in New York City’s Central Park before an estimated 250,000 people.

I asked this question recently of Lon Allison, author of a forthcoming book *Billy Graham: An Ordinary Man and His Extraordinary God*. Mr. Allison is an evangelical pastor and knows the Graham family well. He said, “Probably no one unless God so desires. A Billy Graham, a Martin Luther King, Jr., a Martin Luther are called and gifted for a special calling in a special time. Billy, when asked that question while leading a global forum of evangelists from around the world answered this way: His arm swept out over the large gathering and simply said, ‘They will.’”

There has not been an evangelical Christian in recent memory with anywhere near the popular appeal of Mr. Graham. For a brief time, in 1989, there was talk of Franklin Graham filling his father’s shoes. Franklin began preaching occasionally at Billy Graham Evangelistic Association events. Then, it was Franklin, rather than his aging father, who prayed at the inauguration of George W. Bush in 2001. But people have not responded to Franklin in remotely the same way.

What is it about Billy Graham that seems so difficult to duplicate? For Mr. Graham, intangibles like personal humility and kindness translated across the television screen. There are other prominent evangelicals who have similar traits, such as Pastor Rick Warren, founder of Saddleback Church

Continued on Page 31

Given his long life, it is easy to forget how young Billy Graham was when he first came into the public eye. 🍷🍷

Catholics so that they could join the church. It was during that time that I began to fall in love with Catholicism.

In *America's Pastor*, the latest biography of the evangelist, the historian Grant Wacker makes a strong claim for Billy Graham's historical importance: "Graham ranks with Martin Luther King, Jr., and Pope John Paul II as one of the most creatively influential Christians of the 20th century," Mr. Wacker writes. "One could make a case for others, too, such as Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, Bishop Fulton Sheen and Mother Teresa, but all of them spoke for a more limited constituency and for a briefer stretch of time."

Mr. Graham had a complicated relationship with Catholics and Catholicism. His own 1998 autobiography, *Just as I Am* (titled after the hymn, which was slowly intoned during the "altar call" at every Graham crusade), described in detail how he opposed Communism and was a friend to Martin Luther King Jr. as well as to President Richard Nixon. It spoke of his opposition to abortion and how he enjoyed the media attention he often received. But there were also moments like this one in the U.S.S.R. in 1988, when Mr. Graham remembered, "sitting on the floor talking with Cardinal John O'Connor of New York about the way Protestant-Roman Catholic relations had changed."

Protestant-Catholic relations did change in those years, in part because of the work of Billy Graham.

He risked a great deal with his core evangelical constituency when he began building bridges with Catholics. This started after his 1957 crusade in New York City at Madison Square Garden, the first time Billy Graham preached on national television, when local Catholic priests warned parishioners against attending. Mr. Graham responded by subsequently reaching out to prominent Catholics in every city as he prepared his next crusade to stand with him as representatives of the Christian faith. The majority of evangelicals were unhappy with this. Some of a more fundamentalist persuasion began to disown Mr. Graham as a

betrayal of the true faith.

But Mr. Graham was drawing crowds—thousands and tens of thousands of people each year—to faith in Jesus Christ. How could any evangelical argue with that?

Martin E. Marty, the Lutheran historian who taught for decades at the University of Chicago and who, at 90, is of Billy Graham's generation, made some of his reputation by covering that famous 1957 Madison Square Garden crusade for *The Christian Century*, a magazine he then went on to edit for half a century. A young Lutheran pastor with his Ph.D. fresh in hand, Mr. Marty published an article that year, "A Tale of Two Cities," portraying Mr. Graham as someone with two audiences or "congregations." Mr. Graham held one congregation, Mr. Marty said, as that rare Christian celebrity who stands out as a figure in the secular media. The other congregation, Mr. Marty said, Mr. Graham had as an exhorter, a builder-up of the converted.

This was a challenge to the depth of Mr. Graham's success as it was then portrayed in the media and by Mr. Graham's organization. The evangelist was not creating converts so much as he was inspiring and reinspiring the already converted, Mr. Marty said. Sitting there in Madison Square Garden at one of the crusade events, Mr. Marty thought to himself, as he told me 60 years later: "The event was described as a great missionary success at converting secular, pagan New York, and yet, when I looked around, I didn't see any of the thousands needing the song sheets. They sang along from memory Gospel hymns which we Lutherans, or Catholics, were unfamiliar with."

Partners in Prayer

Mr. Graham's early commitment to relationships with Catholics was muddled, at best. During the 1960 U.S. presidential election, for example, according to the biographer William Martin, the evangelist made it clear to many that Richard Nixon was his man and that he was deeply concerned at the prospect of a Catholic president. Soon thereafter, however, Mr. Graham seems to have changed his perspective. He experienced a warming and openness to expressions of Christian faith that had been previously foreign to his Southern, fundamentalist, Southern Baptist roots. In *Just as I Am*, Mr. Graham would explain that ecumenical notions began stirring in him back at the very beginning of his ministry, before the Los Angeles crusade. These took time to develop, he said, and he had to move carefully.

By 1961, Mr. Graham and President Kennedy prayed side by side at a Washington prayer breakfast. A few years later, in 1964, Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston (who, as

archbishop, had even endorsed a Graham crusade in Boston in 1950) met with Mr. Graham upon returning from Rome and the Second Vatican Council, declaring before a national television audience that Mr. Graham's message was good for Catholics.

Cardinal Cushing said, "God will bless [Graham's] preaching and crusade." Mr. Graham responded with gratitude, stating that he felt much closer to Catholics and Catholic tradition than he did to what was more alien to his message: liberal Protestantism.

Such an embrace of Catholic understandings of faith over liberal Protestant ones would give birth to the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" initiative of Richard John Neuhaus and Charles Colson 30 years later. Their joint ecumenical document, published in 1994, used biblical and theological principles to rally around shared political issues like the right to life. Catholic co-signers of the ecumenical document included George Weigel and the Jesuit theologian Avery Dulles, S.J.

Throughout the remaining four decades of his public preaching ministry, Mr. Graham was known for warm friendships with other prominent Catholics, including Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., who even gave his permission for Mr. Graham to hold a crusade on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in its famous football stadium. Of course, Mr. Graham filled the stadium. Then there were notable and public friendships with Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Cardinal Francis Spellman, even Pope John Paul II.

Mr. Graham sought out the pope in 1981, requesting a private audience at the Vatican, something his core audience surely found strange. A photo op with the pope was not something any evangelical leader in the past had desired. Later, Mr. Graham proudly—and perhaps again somewhat indiscreetly—repeated John Paul II's private words to him: "We are brothers." The effect was powerful, and evangelicals and Catholics warmed to each other.

In 2000 John Paul II even sent official Catholic delegates to Amsterdam to participate in a large conference the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association was sponsoring on the subject of worldwide evangelism. One of the Catholic bishops who attended was Bishop Michael Warfel, then chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Evangelization. According to a book by Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism*, Bishop Warfel remarked afterward: "I wish I could get more Catholics to have such enthusiasm for their faith in Christ!"

How interesting all of this is, and how easily we have

in California. He is the author of a book that sold more than 30 million copies, and he was once prominent enough that presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain came to his church for a presidential debate in 2008. But since then, there has been less interest in Mr. Warren as a public figure.

The most unusual thing about Mr. Graham's success was the unlikely combination of personal appeal (looks, voice, reputation, likeability) with a message of sin and condemnation. He was able to point at millions and say, "You are a sinner," and the millions kept watching and listening. Why they did not turn off their televisions, or stop going to those "crusades," is the real mystery. However, the notion of a "next Billy Graham" must take stock of the fact that we do not watch television in the way we once did. Audiences are more segmented.

If I had to pick someone closest to being a Billy Graham today, it would be Rob Bell. A Wheaton College graduate like Mr. Graham, Bell is currently touring dozens of American cities making the case that "everything is spiritual," his most common message. Mr. Bell was named by Time magazine as one of the "100 Most Influential People in the World" in 2011, before he left his megachurch in Michigan, moved to California and began appearing on Oprah Winfrey programs. Bell, at 48, has the number one spirituality podcast (RobCast) on iTunes, which is the measure today for what was once measured by people filling a stadium. Bell does not ask for conversions to Christianity per se, but challenges people to live authentic lives. His texts are not always Gospel-based or biblical, and his answers are complex.

All of which is to say: He is no Billy Graham.

Jon M. Sweeney

perhaps forgotten it, living as we do in a new age, when it has become common again for many Catholics to focus on what is distinctive about our faith and tradition rather than what unites us with others. Evangelicals have likewise turned back from those bridges forged decades ago by Mr. Graham and others.

Many prominent evangelical pastors in the years since “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” appeared in 1994 have criticized it, saying that it went too far in claiming theological agreement between the two sides. And many priests today would be hesitant to align themselves with evangelical techniques like those once practiced by Billy Graham and endorsed by Cardinal Cushing in Boston. They likely would be hesitant to use Mr. Graham’s language for faith, which they might find simplistic to the point of being misleading.

This story also cannot be concluded without some mention of how difficult Billy Graham’s son, Franklin Graham, has made the situation. In the area of ecumenical relationships, as in many other areas, Franklin has slowly eroded the good will his father built up. Because of advancing age and the Parkinson’s disease that afflicted Billy Graham since 1992, he had lost the ability to speak. For decades, Franklin has used his father’s reputation to sanction opinions in politics and the culture wars that his father would not appreciate.

It is true that the way of becoming a Christian differs in Catholicism and evangelicalism, and there are differences between how an evangelical feels confident of eternal salvation following a “decision for Christ,” and what a Catholic reads in the Catechism of the Catholic Church about eternal security (see No. 1861). Still, referring back to the quotation from the Catholic bishop who attended the conference in Amsterdam at John Paul II’s request, there is something unmistakably important about unified Christians’ sharing an enthusiasm for faith in Christ across denominational lines.

Willing to Listen

I recently asked my old professor, Mark Noll, once of Wheaton College, now recently retired from the University of Notre Dame, to reflect on his personal experiences with Mr. Graham. Noll said, “I met Graham only twice, I believe, at Wheaton when he sat down with faculty groups on a couple of occasions. I remember mostly that he was reserved and eager to listen and not nearly as full of himself as many celebrities, Christian or not, often are.”

In Noll and Nystrom’s *Is the Reformation Over?* the



CNS photo/pool, Chip Somodevilla via Reuters

authors reflect as evangelical historians on Mr. Graham’s influence on evangelical-Catholic relations. They point to the way his celebrity led to difficulties in the United States that were not always present in other parts of the world. In Canada, for example, the most popular evangelical television program from the 1970s through the 1990s was “100 Huntley Street,” which featured regular sermons from a Jesuit priest, Bob MacDougall, S.J. The evangelical host of the show once explained: “If you changed the voices, it could have been Billy Graham. Literally tens of thousands of Roman Catholics opened their hearts to Jesus as a result of Father Bob.”

This points again to what might be most important,



The casket with the body of the Rev. Billy Graham lies in honor during a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in Washington on Feb. 28.

whether one is evangelical or Catholic. Yes, there are differences. What continues to separate Catholics and evangelicals most of all is probably the understanding of Scripture. For Mr. Graham and those who have come after him, the word of Scriptures understood similarly to the *sola scriptura* approach of Martin Luther: to be preached from between the covers of their Bibles.

But for a Catholic, the it is much more. The Word was present at creation, made incarnate through the Virgin Mary, and is mystically present in the church, its tradition and magisterium. But what Mr. Graham was about was the starting point, and only the starting point. The rest, he always said, was up to the churches. Father Hesburgh of

Notre Dame and Cardinal Cushing of Boston must have figured that once Mr. Graham set people in motion, Catholic churches were as good a place as any to gather them up and make Christians out of them.

Jon M. Sweeney is a frequent contributor to America and the author of many books, including Francis of Assisi in His Own Words and, for children, "The Pope's Cat" series, illustrated by Roy DeLeon.



Photo: iStock

AMBIVALENCE & EVANGELIZATION

When my daughter told me, ‘I wish girls could be priests,’ I didn’t know what to say.

By Barry Hudock

The rites of the annual paschal triduum fascinate and inspire me more than almost anything else that the church’s liturgy has to offer, and I know I am not alone. Like many other Catholics, I find myself drawn in and moved, year after year, during those three great days. So I probably should not have been surprised to realize last year that they were also moving my 9-year-old daughter.

Our family had attended the liturgies of Holy Thursday and Good Friday together, and now we were at the Easter Vigil. Our pastor was blessing the waters of the baptismal font, an evocative moment in a liturgy laden with them. As he solemnly dipped the massive new Easter candle into the font, once, twice, three times, while calling down the Holy Spirit upon the water, Abigail, the youngest of our seven children, leaned over to me. I bent my head close to hear her whisper: “I wish girls could be priests.”

Abigail’s words tripped me up and distracted me from

much of what followed. The fact is, they stirred up in me the profound ambivalence I feel about this topic. I do not mind doctrine that is challenging or countercultural—seven kids, remember?—and I understand what the church teaches on a male-only priesthood, the authority with which it has been presented and the reasons offered to support it. Indeed, I have repeated all of it from time to time, respectfully and confidently, both in parish faith formation settings and in personal interactions.

At the same time, I am uncomfortable with the possibility that the teaching might be more rooted in cultural norms and less in the will of God than many who lead the church realize. How can I raise my five daughters to reject the limitations our society might put on them as women, while also teaching them to understand and embrace the one imposed on them on the same basis by the church we love?

I do not doubt the good will or faithfulness of my fellow Catholics who reject the doctrine. But doing the same is a bridge that I am not so far able, in conscience, to cross. ●●

‘No Authority Whatsoever’

I realize it is possible that church teaching on women’s ordination might “develop” to the point of looking very much like the correction or even contradiction of what it previously was. It would not be the first instance of such evolution. Throughout the three years I spent researching and writing about John Courtney Murray’s contribution to Catholic teaching on religious freedom, I was continually struck by the certainty with which the Jesuit theologian’s powerful and highly regarded opponents condemned his thinking as contrary to church doctrine.

And why not? In 1832 Pope Gregory XVI had dismissed the idea of religious freedom as “absurd,” and Pope Pius IX had included it in the famous “Syllabus of Errors” in 1864. Murray’s greatness lies in his success at constructing an argument that allowed the Second Vatican Council to recognize religious freedom as a fundamental demand of human dignity without having to explicitly reject the previous teaching in its own historical context. Since then, the council’s teaching has been reasserted in the strongest terms by St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

It is easy now to see this as a legitimate development of doctrine. But for many in Murray’s day, especially those who were the most self-consciously “orthodox,” it was not clearly so until an ecumenical council of the church said it was. Murray’s thinking did not go from false to true in December 1965; rather, the negative judgment of many theologians and bishops was newly understood to be mistaken.

We could multiply examples to make the same point. I might quickly mention the ancient doctrine “outside the church there is no salvation,” which the great 20th-century theologian Avery Dulles, S.J., once said “has been so drastically reinterpreted by Vatican II that the meaning is almost the opposite of what the words seem to say.”

I also realize that the undeniable impact of cultural factors on what the church has taught about women in the past makes it reasonable to approach its teaching today with, at the very least, a fair amount of skepticism and scrutiny. After all, Pope Leo XIII insisted in “Rerum Novarum” (1891) that “woman is by nature fit-

ted for home-work, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family.” That message came just a century before St. John Paul II wrote, in his “Letter to Women” (1995):

Thank you, women who work! You are present and active in every area of life—social, economic, cultural, artistic and political. In this way you make an indispensable contribution to the growth of a culture which unites reason and feeling, to a model of life ever open to the sense of “mystery,” to the establishment of economic and political structures ever more worthy of humanity.

With all that as background, one might find it easy to dismiss the Vatican’s document “Inter Insigniores” (1976), which reaffirmed that only men can be ordained priests, relying heavily on the symbolic significance of the fact that Jesus was a man. It was, after all, not a papal document but a curial one. But then there is St. John Paul II’s “Ordinatio Sacerdotalis” (1994). In that document, the pope reaffirms the church’s inability to ordain women in language that is stark and clear and strikingly authoritative. Rejecting any suggestion that the question is “open to debate” or that the teaching possesses “merely disciplinary force,” John Paul proclaims:

Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church’s divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful.

While the argument that this teaching is offered infallibly is hard to sustain—despite the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s (fallible) judgment that it is—there seems to me to be little getting around it without conceding quite a lot about the fallibility of papal teaching and the

willingness of God to permit error in important and authoritative doctrine. Precisely because of the points I made above, I do not doubt the good will or the faithfulness of my fellow Catholics who vocally reject the doctrine. But doing the same is a bridge that I am not so far able, in conscience, to cross. May God—and my daughters—forgive my lack of courage and good judgment if I am wrong.

A Matter of Evangelization

Wherever you stand on the matter, it should be clear to all of us that the doctrine represents a problem for evangelization. Even if the teaching is not unjust—even if it is not the result of the church’s failure to fully appreciate the dignity and equality of women—the perception by many, if not most people in the United States today is that it is. And the very perception of an unjust church handicaps its ability to witness effectively to the world. By way of analogy, if rumors circulate throughout town about a particular restaurant having a filthy kitchen, then no matter how clean the kitchen actually is or how good the food is, no one will care what is on the menu.

If evangelization is the central priority that we say so often it is, then even the most self-consciously orthodox among us, even those convinced no woman ever should or will be ordained a priest, should be intensely concerned with ensuring that the church is absolutely and obviously committed to the equality and dignity of women. Given this, efforts to expand the role of women in the church should not be a source of conflict among the faithful at different places along the theological spectrum but a point of contact and cooperation. How might we join together around this issue? Here are a few ideas.

1. We should cry out together for greater roles for women in church administration and leadership at all levels. The gift of being a good leader is not a grace of the sacrament of orders. And since many women today are not only theologically trained but have reached levels of theological accomplishment that far surpass those of most priests, there is no reason that women should not serve as officials at all ecclesial levels, from the Roman Curia on down. There is also no theological reason faithful women who have attained the highest accomplishments in church, business, social services and other areas could not be named cardinals.

2. Bishops, priests and deacons of all stripes should strive to be more attentive in their preaching to the dignity of women. That will mean becoming more familiar with feminist scriptural commentary and theology. It will mean lamenting the absence of many of the most important Scripture passages about women from the Sunday

lectionary cycle—how is it possible that Mary’s Magnificat is never proclaimed on any Sunday of the three-year cycle?—and for that reason making sure to preach on the passages about women that are there. Be sure, for example, to use the longer version of the Gospel on the Sunday after Christmas, Year B, since the shorter version excludes the passage about the prophetess Anna. Similarly, proclaim the longer form of the Gospel on the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time in Year B, since the woman with a hemorrhage is excised from the shorter form.

3. We must also take as seriously as possible the question of the ordination of women to the diaconate, recently raised again by Pope Francis. After all, the strongest conclusion that could be reached on the topic in 2002 by the International Theological Commission, following a five-year study of Scripture, doctrine, theology and linguistics, was that the evidence, in the words of its general secretary, “tend[s] to support the exclusion of this possibility.” From a Vatican-appointed, (then) all-male group of scholars, that’s practically resounding support for women deacons. Given the cultural biases that mark our history and our present, the reasons for excluding women from any role should have to be blindingly clear and obvious.

We certainly need to dismiss the argument against women deacons that says it is unworkable because it would only encourage those who wish to see women priests. Current canon law—as revised under Pope Benedict XVI—makes clear the theological distinctions between the diaconate and the priesthood. If women can be ordained deacons, then it is just too bad if someone gets the wrong idea about women priests. We will either have to have a good explanation for why the two are very different or admit we cannot explain why they are and accept the consequences of that.

Who knows whether my daughter Abigail, as she moves into adulthood 10 or 15 years from now, will still wish she could be a priest. Even if she does not, she will be—if she grows into the smart, self-confident and faithful Catholic that I hope she does—at least a bit uncomfortable with her church’s teaching on the ordination of women. As she struggles with that discomfort, I hope that one conclusion will be nearly impossible for her, thanks to the life and witness of the church at that time. She will not dismiss the teaching as a sign of patriarchal attitudes at the heart of the church’s structures and its message.

Barry Hudock is the author of *Struggle, Condemnation, Vindication: John Courtney Murray’s Journey Toward Vatican II* (Liturgical Press).

The Legacy of John Paul II

After St. John Paul II died on April 2, 2005, the huge crowd at his funeral chanted “Santo Subito!” for the well-traveled, much-beloved pope. Long before Pope Francis earned the nickname, St. John Paul II was known as “the people’s pope.” St. John Paul II recognized the value of modern travel and mass media in spreading the Gospel and a global message of good will. He also used his personal visits to reinvigorate local church communities and canonized more saints than any pope in history. During more than a quarter-century on the chair of Peter, St. John Paul II also published numerous important documents in the life of the church.

The following assessment praised him for his strengths, accomplishments and personal holiness. “He spoke with conviction; he was principled; he challenged us and said hard things,” the editors wrote. “Even those who disagreed with him admired his honesty and conviction. He will be a hard act to follow.”

John Paul II presided over the Catholic Church for 26-and-a-half years, longer than any other pope except St. Peter and Blessed Pius IX. For about half the people living today, he is the only pope they have ever known. During those 26 years, he visited over 130 countries, published more than 50 major documents, canonized hundreds of saints and appointed most of the church’s active bishops.

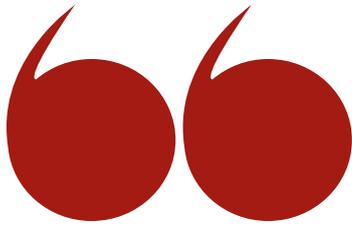
But these numbers are only part of the story. Pope John Paul II will go down in history as the most important world leader in the second half of the 20th century. He changed the course of history and helped bring an end to the Cold War through his support of [the Polish trade union] Solidarity and the Polish freedom movement. This started the landslide that wiped out Communism in Eastern Europe and eventually the Soviet Union. He was the right man in the right place at the right time to shape world history. For those of us who grew up under the terror of the mushroom-shaped cloud, this was an extraordinary achievement. And he brought it all about as a nonviolent revolution without shedding blood, proving foolish the conservative hawks who had counseled violent confrontation and first strikes that would have cost the lives of millions.

But John Paul’s care for the world was not directed only to Eastern Europe. He was a prophet for peace and justice elsewhere as well, especially the Middle East and the third world. He balanced concern for the rights

of Palestinians with his condemnation of terror. He supported humanitarian intervention but opposed pre-emptive war. He worried about the impact of economic globalization on the poor in the third world, and urged rich countries like the United States to give more generously to development. In a world of competing economic and national self-interests, he was a prophetic voice for humanity and reconciliation. He admired the American people but was not afraid to challenge government policies that were contrary to moral values, whether these were the Clinton administration’s population policies or both Bush administrations’ wars against Iraq.

John Paul will also be remembered for greatly improving relations between Catholics and Jews. Long after people forget what Communism was, there will still be Catholics and Jews who will look back at the end of the 20th century as a turning point in their relationship. Disagreements and controversies will continue, but they will be disputes among brothers and sisters, not adversaries. Likewise, he began a dialogue with Muslims that we hope will bear fruit in the years ahead.

But John Paul’s vision of himself was not as a politician or diplomat but as a teacher. His writing ran the gamut from poetic musings to scholarly tomes. He came to the papacy with firm convictions about how the Second Vatican Council should be interpreted. He felt there was a need for



John Paul's vision of himself was not as a politician or diplomat but as a teacher. ●●

stability and calm after the tumultuous days that followed Vatican II and considered himself responsible for protecting the deposit of faith while at the same time applying it to the needs and concerns of the day. That not everyone accepted his teaching must have been one of his severest disappointments.

John Paul was often mislabeled as a conservative. True, he stressed traditional church teaching. He also allowed his subordinates to silence and remove theologians from teaching positions. But anyone who listened to him carefully realized that he did not fit into the normal liberal-conservative boxes of American politics and culture. True, he opposed abortion, the use of condoms, gay marriage, women priests and a married clergy. But he was to the left of liberal Democrats when it came to opposing capital punishment and the war in Iraq and supporting foreign aid and the United Nations. And while he opposed women's ordination, he also opened other church positions to women, from altar servers to diocesan chancellors.

John Paul will also be remembered for his immensely successful pastoral visits to every corner of the world. People by the millions came out to pray with him and hear him preach. "What did they come out to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" They came to see a holy man, a man of conviction and principle, a man who cared about them and a man who had changed the course of history. In this day of world leaders who tell us what their handlers think we want to hear, who do not open their mouths without checking the polls and focus groups, John Paul was clearly different. He spoke with conviction; he was principled; he challenged us and said hard things. Even those who disagreed with him admired his honesty and conviction. He will be a hard act to follow. May he rest in peace.

Editorial, April 18, 2005

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National call-in Feb. 26

The U.S. bishops are **urging Catholics** to call Congress on Feb. 26 and demand they act on behalf of “Dreamers,” undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as minors.

“We are deeply disappointed that the Senate was not able to come together in a bipartisan manner to secure legislative protection for the Dreamers,” Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Austin, Tex., the president of the U.S. bishops’ conference, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, the U.S.C.C.B. vice president, and Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Tex., chairman of the U.S. bishops’ migration committee said in a **joint statement** on Feb. 19. “We ask once again that members of Congress show the leadership necessary to find a just and humane solution for these young people, who daily face mounting anxiety and uncertainty.”

Many dioceses, like the **Archdiocese of Los Angeles**, are asking “parishes, schools and ministries” to spread the word about the national call-in day.

“All Catholics are asked to please call the Capitol switchboard at (855) 589-5698 and press



The Passions of Jim and Jeannie Gaffigan

By Bill McGarvey



Photo: Bud Cilek

► In a field like stand-up, which is dominated by solo performers, the Gaffigans' collaboration is unique. The couple is pictured here with their five children.

"It's like, you know, is it St. Augustine who said 'the best way to convince someone is by an example rather than telling them'?" muses Jim Gaffigan as he sits in his home office in Manhattan. His wife and writing and producing partner Jeannie has just stepped out to welcome their five young children home from school, and Gaffigan is trying to describe the couple's "non-preachy" approach to their Catholic faith. After briefly pausing to consider that he might be out on a bit of a theological limb with the Augustine reference, he tries to backtrack for a moment before finally giving up and admitting with a self-deprecating laugh, "He didn't say *that!*"

Granted, the doctors of the church may not be his stock-in-trade; but make no mistake, Jim Gaffigan has turned thinking out loud into a very successful career. On topics ranging from God, marriage and fatherhood to bacon, Hot Pockets and overeating, the 51-year-old's eccentric brand of observational humor has made him one of the most popular stand-up comedians working today. Audiences pack theaters across North America, Europe and Australia to see him perform. His five comedy specials are Netflix staples, and "The Jim Gaffigan Show" ran for two critically acclaimed seasons on TV Land. His two books have spent multiple months on the New York Times best-seller list, and he was even tapped to open for Pope Francis in 2015 at the Festival of Families in Philadelphia.

It is an impressive résumé that will soon include the release of his most significant dramatic film role yet. "Chappaquiddick" (due out April 6)—in which he co-stars alongside Jason Clark and Ed Helms—tells the story of Ted Kennedy's infamous car accident in 1969, in which Kennedy's passenger, 28-year-old Mary Jo Kopechne, died. It is a story of power, privilege and corruption from a half century ago whose contemporary parallels in politics and the #MeToo movement are impossible to ignore.

THE INNER VOICE

Onstage, Gaffigan—who grew up in a small town in Indiana—exudes a Midwestern normalcy akin to his comedic forebear Bob Newhart: the perpetually put-upon, middle-aged, middle management, slightly dim American everyman. As with Newhart, those externals are deceptive and mask a keen intelligence and a sharp sense of the absurd. Nowhere is that more apparent than when Gaffigan thinks out loud during his stand-up sets using his signature "inner voice"—a running, critical meta-commentary that he regularly sprinkles throughout his act. Delivered with the high-pitched, breathy tone of a disapproving aunt, it is a disarming and hilarious device that enables him to be both comedian and critic simultaneously: "I would like everyone to feel comfortable. That's why I'd like to talk to you about Jesus." *"He better not!"*

Anointed the "King of (Clean) Comedy" by The Wall Street Journal,



“Dating and work were the same thing,” Jeannie Gaffigan says of the couple’s early days together. The Gaffigans are pictured here with Bill McGarvey.

Photo: Bud Click

Gaffigan, like his friend Jerry Seinfeld, does not curse in his act. “I felt like I wasn’t done writing the joke if I was relying on a curse word,” he told the *Journal’s* Don Steinberg in 2013. After moving to New York in the early ’90s, the Georgetown University graduate worked in advertising and spent years honing his comedy chops on the club circuit. “I went through a lot of different styles of stand-up. I did impressions; I did voices. I was angry up there. I was silly. And I kind of settled in,” he said.

The search for his own authentic comedic voice received an immeasurable boost in 2000 when he met and started a creative partnership with the director and actress Jeannie Noth. A Midwest native as well, Noth—the oldest of nine—had studied directing at Marquette University and was running a not-for-profit theater company in New York at the time that

produced Shakespearean plays with inner-city teenagers. Her proficiency as a multitasking whirling dervish was evident even then. Jim asked for some help producing a CD of his stand-up act; Jeannie began recording him in the New York clubs and soon started offering performance advice. “Jim was working a little more blue at that time,” says Jeannie, “so I would say ‘instead of saying that, what if you use this expression?’”

Jim understood early on that his future wife was a force to be reckoned with. Before they began dating he saw Jeannie direct 100 children in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at St. Patrick’s Youth Center in New York’s Little Italy. “These were inner-city children, some of whom could barely read; and it was a hip-hop version!” he recalls. “She was on a bullhorn directing, ‘All right you guys, come out now!’”

“They were damn good, too!”

Jeannie interjects.

“I was like, ‘Okay, this woman’s crazy, but there’s nothing she can’t do.’”

‘IT’S NOT SOMETHING YOU SOLVE’

In a field like stand-up, which is dominated by solo performers with distinct and often fiercely independent voices, the Gaffigans’ collaboration is unique. Spending time with them and seeing them finish each other’s sentences, it becomes clear that the boundary between their creative partnership and their personal lives can get blurry. “Dating and work were the same thing,” says Jeannie of their early days together. “Right away I was like, ‘I’m busy; you’re busy. If we’re going to date we need to be working on something together.’”

They were married in 2003, and after their oldest child, Marre, now 13, was born they would bring her along to shows. Jeannie would be taking

notes on Jim's set while their daughter slept on the couch in the venue's green room. Their creative dynamic has the feel of an ongoing conversation in which their material is forged and refined through a continuous back and forth. It's a dynamic that they have had to adapt continuously, given the demands of their family. "The partnership has changed every year depending on how many kids we have and what age those kids are," says Jim. "There used to be times when the kids were in bed after the show and we'd do some writing. Well, with five kids, they're not all going to bed [at the same time]. Bigger kids, bigger problems. We are literally stealing moments to write."

As their family grew and Jim's stand-up career took off, they would adapt by scheduling his tours during spring break or summer vacations and by traveling with the whole family on a tour bus. "Sometimes for the summer tours we did like 30 days straight," Jim says. "It was all this balancing act...how can we do stand-up and not be away from each other? And it's a constant [challenge].... It's not something you solve."

Their shared work ethic, a love of comedy and a measure of self-control enable their collaborative process to function smoothly. "I don't consider writing comedy work," says Jim. "I consider sitting on a plane work; I consider the bureaucracy of everything work." For Jeannie, it is important that creative differences do not spill over into their personal lives. "It takes a great deal of self-control not to go down the 'You're just like your mother' path," she says, "because then it morphs into a 'married couple fight' rather than two writers with a creative disagreement."

James's Book

By James Matthew Wilson

One night, my oldest boy stands by my desk
And asks if *he* can write a book. Of course,
I tell him, What kind of story should it be?
He does not know, but soon, as from some source
Flowing through the depths of the earth, we see
A boy at a front door, a shadowy guest.

A trembling hand extends a folded note.
And late that night, the boy reads it in fear.
Days pass, he loads a pack with what he needs,
Till in the dark, his footsteps frighten deer
Away and bring him to a place of weeds
And stones in the old forest. This we wrote.

And we wrote next his searching through the waste,
The flashlight burning blue on logs and moss,
As he brushed back thick leaves to look beneath.
Then his caked fingers felt it—the iron cross,
Rusty, jagged, and chill. He clenched his teeth
And dug the clay in which it was encased.

At last, then, in the insect thrumming dark,
He gripped it firm and twisted to the left,
Just as the note instructed. Ancient gears
Somewhere below, disturbed from their long rest,
Began to shift, the cross sprang up, and here
Opened the door its buried heft had marked.

What now? I say. He waits for me, unsure.
Dust rises on warm air from down below
But his light cannot reach what may lie there.
He must descend into the deep unknown
On a rough braided rope to find out where
The passage leads and what it holds in store.

That's all we've got. I tell him we'll need art
To fill out all the pages of our book.
"I'll do it. I can draw the cross," he says,
And you can tell from the warm, wavering look
That just to make that shape in crayon is
All he dares try, but he can't wait to start.

James Matthew Wilson was a runner-up in the 2015 Foley Poetry contest. His most recent books include *The Vision of the Soul: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in the Western Tradition* and *Some Permanent Things, a collection of poems*.



Jim Gaffigan, standing center right, plays U.S. attorney Paul Markham in “Chappaquiddick.” Jason Clarke, sitting center, plays Ted Kennedy.

PASSION PROJECT

Their writing partnership reached a watershed moment with the debut of their sitcom “The Jim Gaffigan Show” in 2015. After developing the show for five years with several near misses on network television, the couple decided to produce it at the cable channel TV Land. The show was a fictionalized version of their lives as a comedian and his wife who are practicing Catholics living with five young children in a small apartment in downtown Manhattan. (The Gaffigans lived in close quarters in New York’s Bowery neighborhood for many years but have since moved to a more spacious loft space nearby.)

The decision to move the show to basic cable was based on their desire

to create a tone and comedic point of view that reflected their actual lives. “It’s our unique spin about how we incorporate our faith into our comedy, our children, our real story,” Jeannie told the AV Club. Capturing that tone required the couple to produce and write every episode. It was an extraordinarily ambitious enterprise that was not only funny; it actually yielded a fascinating magic trick of sorts.

In the show, the fictional Jeannie (Ashley Williams) is a stay-at-home mom whose best friend Daniel (Michael Ian Black) is a gay man who is a constant presence in their lives and an eternal irritant to Jim (played by Gaffigan himself). She is deeply involved in her local parish, and their young African priest (Tongayi Chiri-

sa) is a frequent visitor to their home. Jim’s closest friend, David (Adam Goldberg), is a Jewish atheist comedian who is on the prowl to bed every attractive woman he sees. Their great feat in all this was that, somehow, the Gaffigans were able to create a world in which being a practicing Catholic in a downtown New York arts culture was not a “problem” that needed to be dealt with or solved. There was no sense of an embattled or hostile alienation from the world around them—or judgment, for that matter. Faith was simply integrated into their lives, an unremarkable fact on the ground.

“That’s probably why Jeannie and I had to write all the episodes,” says Jim. “Because otherwise it turns it into a bar joke. I mean, ‘A



Photo: Entertainment Studio

gay man and a priest and an atheist walk into a bar? We didn't want it to be about that. The reality is, in our lives, having friends who are atheists or have different viewpoints makes our lives rich."

The truth is the world the Gaffigans portrayed on their show is simply an amplified comedic version of the messy and complicated lives that most American Catholics—and people of all faiths—unconsciously negotiate every day. What is astonishing is not that they pulled it off but that we do not see that reality reflected more regularly in popular media.

After producing 23 episodes, the couple decided that they needed to shut their passion project down in late 2016. In what might be the world's first

truly honest example of "the desire to spend more time with their family," Jim and Jeannie realized that with both of them working 80-hour weeks, neither of them was acting as their children's main caregivers, and that needed to change. "I knew we could do years of a really great show," says Jeannie. "But when we look back, are we going to say, 'You know what, we did a really great show but we neglected our family?' Or do we say, 'This was a great thing in our life, and we have so much more we can do that we can tailor-make to our family?'" Immediately after their decision to stop, they were onto their next adventure, Jim's stand-up special "Cinco."

Their ability to create the nuanced sense of faith of "The Jim Gaffigan Show" is due in no small part to Jim's own journey. In his stand-up routine, he has famously—and affectionately—referred to Jeannie as a "Shiite Catholic" for her level of devotion, but his own story mirrors the experience of many Gen Xers. "I went to a Catholic high school, a Catholic college; but for most of my 20s I would probably identify as an agnostic. I probably went through a couple years where I was a rebellious atheist. So I empathize with their point of view. I understand that," he says.

Jim's sense of faith today is clearly very personal and not easily articulated except to say that he is not interested in holding himself up as a model Catholic. (There's a decent chance that in his fumbling of the St. Augustine quote earlier, he was really trying to quote one of Jeannie's favorite lines from St. Ignatius: "Love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words.")

He credits learning about St. Faustina and her devotion to divine mercy in his 30s as a turning point for

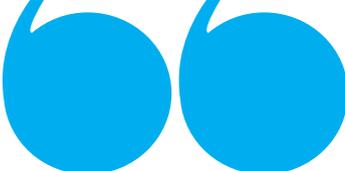
greater openness to moving beyond intellectual questions about God and making the leap of faith. "Cynicism is very comforting," he says. "Getting caught up in the larger intellectual debate might be constructive on an intellectual level, but is that serving the person you want to be?"

HOLY WEEK 2017

"Am I going to die?" is not a question any 40-something mother of five young children ever wants to contemplate, but it is exactly what Jeannie Gaffigan put to her surgeon during Holy Week in 2017.

Complaining of hearing loss in one of her ears, she was sent to a neurosurgeon who confirmed that she had a brain tumor that was deeply wrapped around her brain stem. Though there was an 80 percent chance it was benign, the location of the tumor around the cranial nerves meant that there was an increased danger that critical functions like speech, swallowing, breathing and facial expression could be damaged. "I liked those odds," says Jeannie. "I was just very confident I was going to live and be able to deal with it. It was like supernatural... I didn't care about having a paralyzed face or any of that stuff."

In hindsight Jim believes that the doctor was being overly optimistic. The medical odyssey that occurred post surgery, in which Jeannie contracted pneumonia in the hospital and needed to endure a tracheotomy, points to a crisis more dire than she perhaps was aware of. Jim feared Jeannie might die, and with her the life they had built together. "There were a realistic couple weeks where I was like, 'It might be over,'" Jim recalls. "I've had a good run...this might be it. I love doing stand-up, but I'd rather not completely fail on the parenting



I don't want our brain surgeon to have hobbies,' jokes Jim. 'You don't want him to be interested in cooking class.'

front. If I was going to be a single parent, that would have to take priority over my career.”

Although Jeannie was desperate to get back home to her children, she could not do so without a nurse on call. Jeannie’s good friend Sister Mary Doolittle, a registered nurse and a member of the Sisters of Life, offered to stay with them. Having been in the hospital for two weeks, Jeannie wanted nothing more than to finally take a shower at home. “One of the best memories of my whole life,” she recalls, “is Jim and a fully habited nun taking me into the shower...and basically hosing blood out of my hair. It was a comedy show.”

For weeks after the surgery she was unable to speak or swallow and was fed through a feeding tube. Less than a year later, however, through speech and swallow therapy, her ability to swallow is improving and though she has one paralyzed vocal chord, she is able to speak.

True to form, the sickness became fodder for the Gaffigans’ comedy writing. Jim recalls Jeannie emerging after being in an M.R.I. tube for hours and telling him to write down a joke idea she had just come up with. They began looking at this serious health situation through their own

comedic sensibilities.

“I don’t want our brain surgeon to have hobbies,” says Jim. “You want him to be like ‘You know what I like to do when I’m not doing brain surgery? I’m thinking about how I can be a better brain surgeon.’ You don’t want him to be interested in cooking class.” They came up with enough material in the six months after the surgery that it formed the heart of their upcoming stand-up special, “Noble Ape,” which will be released this summer.

NEXT CHAPTER

“I think it’s so cute,” Jim says with a teasing paternal seriousness while sitting across from his daughter Marre, “how like, she’s 13 but, she still acts like she’s not going to be a nun.” His daughter smiles and rolls her eyes—tacit teenage affirmation that this is part and parcel of being a Gaffigan. Fortunately, with Jeannie about to mark a one-year anniversary since her surgery, they are all able to focus on topics that are not life and death.

For Jim, that means the release of “Chappaquiddick” in early April. Gaffigan loves acting but has not always found opportunities that are right for him. With the role of Paul Markham, a U.S. attorney from Massachusetts and a Kennedy insider, he has landed in a movie that is riveting not simply because of the horrifying episode it recounts but for its relevance to scandals making headlines in 2018.

Markham, along with the Kennedy cousin Joe Gargan (Ed Helms), were the people Teddy turned to on July 18, 1969, after his reckless driving and failure to report the accident in which Mary Jo Kopechne died. The facts of the story alone are enough to disturb, but Jason Clarke’s ability to embody Teddy’s strange mixture of insecurity and arrogance is downright

chilling. The film was shot before our country began its current reckoning with white male power and privilege, but for Gaffigan it is essentially the same scandal, different decade. “[It’s] just powerful people getting away with things,” he says; “it’s money and power.”

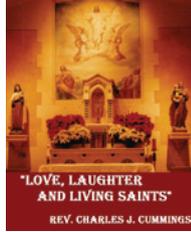
Jim admits that “growing up an Irish Catholic American, the Kennedys hold this appeal,” but he also recognizes that it is no mean feat to reconcile two very different aspects of the deceased Massachusetts senator. The man who became a political punchline after Chappaquiddick was the same man who went on to become the “Lion of the Senate” and was a tireless, decades-long advocate for the less fortunate and a leader on issues like health care and disability rights.

While Jim says the events at Chappaquiddick were “horrifying,” he is careful to note that John Curran, the film’s director, always cautioned, “This isn’t going to be a hit piece, and it isn’t going to be an apology” but an interpretation based on the available research. “I think this is an important movie, and good art asks good questions. It doesn’t give answers.” Still, he cannot help but wonder if Kennedy’s record of service after the scandal should be considered in our ultimate assessment of the man. “Did he earn that second chance?” Jim asks. “Because I am somebody who personally has been the beneficiary of second chances. We all are.”

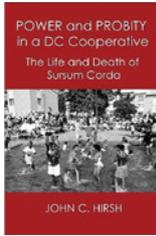
Bill McCarvey, a musician and writer, is the author of *The Freshman Survival Guide* and owner of *McG-Media.com*.

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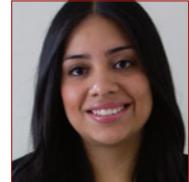
Jill Kafka, Exec. Director, Partnership Schools

Zach Presutti, S.J., Exec. Director, THRIVE for Life Prison Ministry

Moderated by **J. D. Long-Garcia**, Senior Editor, *America* magazine



Kevin Appleby



Laura Garcia

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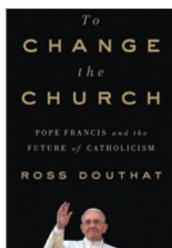
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In his preface to *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*, Ross Douhat describes himself as something of a Graham Greene character: the “good bad Catholic,” or the “bad good Catholic,” depending on how one uses the term. He was raised in an Episcopal family that became Catholic when he was a teenager, but his early years were shaped by various Protestant circles: mainline, evangelical and Pentecostal. Now, despite what he calls his “spiritual sloth,” he is a deeply committed Catholic. Hence his problem with Pope Francis, who he fears may be breaking faith with Jesus.

Presently a columnist for *The New York Times*, Douhat is a journalist, not a theologian. But he is also an astute, often insightful Vaticanologist. His retelling of the last two papal conclaves reads like a political drama. Central to his narrative is a group of cardinals that included Carlo Maria Martini of Milan, Walter Kasper of Rotten-

burg-Stuttgart, Godfried Danneels of Brussels and Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster; he calls them the St. Gallen faction, from the Swiss city where they were accustomed to meet. When it became evident that Cardinal Martini would not gain enough votes at the conclave in 2005 to challenge Joseph Ratzinger, the group turned to an emerging Latin American, Jorge Mario Bergoglio from Buenos Aires. Douhat claims that Bergoglio asked his supporters to support Ratzinger on the fourth ballot, assuring Ratzinger's succession.

But after Benedict's surprising announcement in 2013 of his resignation, the St. Gallen group turned again to Bergoglio. For some cardinals, his concern with poverty, social justice and moving beyond the culture wars was attractive; others appreciated his opposition to Argentina's left-wing Jesuits, his popular supernaturalism and his conflicts with the Argentine president. The Latin American and African cardinals liked his non-European perspective. The North Americans saw him as someone who could address the corruption of the Vatican Curia, while the curialists themselves thought his pontificate would not be a long one.

His short speech at the consistory, calling attention to a self-referential church that keeps Jesus within herself and would not let him out, calling for a pope who would help the church go out to the peripheries, had something for all the parties. He was elected on the fifth ballot, with over 90 of the 115 votes.

The early images of his papacy drew the world's attention: Francis personally paying his hotel bill, choosing the Vatican guest house for his residence, washing the feet of prisoners (including two young women) on Holy Thursday, embracing children and a man whose head was covered with boils, calling for a church that resembles a field hospital after battle, and suggesting that the church should be concerned with other issues besides abortion. In his first year Pope Francis seemed to be trying to walk a fine line between two currents in the church, one more radical and another overly traditional, as if he were seeking a rebalancing rather than a revolution. But his episcopal appointments began to show a new pattern: men who were pastors, many from what some see as the church's more progressive wing.

When Francis invited Cardinal

James Martin, SJ and Ross Douthat at the Sheen Center in New York on Dec. 13

Walter Kasper to give the keynote address at a consistory for new cardinals in February 2014, Douthat saw a red light. As early as 1993, Kasper had proposed relaxing the rules prohibiting divorced Catholics who had remarried without an annulment from receiving Holy Communion. This would become the most controversial question discussed at the first of the two assemblies of the Synod of Bishops on the family called by Pope Francis, a synod Douthat repeatedly describes as “rigged” or “stage-managed” (though he admits they were not as scripted as the synods under Francis’ two predecessors). But his main concern is that Kasper’s proposal meant that the church would break faith with its own tradition. This becomes his argument for the remainder of the book.

He gives a fascinating picture of intra-ecclesial battles and less than edifying episodes in papal history. His trump card is his assertion that what is at stake is not just discipline or doctrine but the very words of Jesus. But despite his efforts to be balanced, his argument frequently overreaches.

While the church always strives to honor what Jesus said about divorce and remarriage, it has made pastoral accommodations since its earliest days. St. Paul did so for a Christian married to an unbeliever who separates from his or her spouse; in such cases, he says, the believer is not bound, as “God has called you to live in peace” (1 Cor 7:15). According to Cardinal Kasper, many of the early churches allowed those living in a second relationship to participate in Communion after a period of penance, a practice tolerated by some church fathers and apparently by the Council of Nicaea. The council fathers at Trent did not condemn the East-

ern Orthodox principle of “economy,” which recognizes the possibility of remarriage after a divorce, although they objected to the practices of Luther and other Protestant reformers.

The annulment process itself, based on the judgment that something essential for marital indissolubility was missing, represents a pastoral accommodation, as does the “internal forum” solution used by many pastors today. Francis’ own views were shaped by his experiences with the poor in Argentina. As a priest from Buenos Aires was quoted in Newsweek in 2014, “When you’re working in a shanty town, 90 percent of your congregation are single or divorced.... Communion for the divorced and remarried is not an issue there. Everyone takes Communion.”

Perhaps where Douthat most falls short is in describing the church. He treats it not as a communion of pastors and faithful but as a political body of bishops, constantly juxtaposing “liberals” and “conservatives,” progressive factions and traditionalist cardinals. He ignores Francis’ efforts to respect synodality in a global church and even compares him, cautiously, to President Trump, though a populist of the left instead of the right. Rarely does he refer to the *sensus fidelium*, with its recognition of the Spirit’s presence in *all* the faithful, or to Francis’ efforts to retrieve the place of conscience and discernment in the church’s life.

Reception of “Amoris Laetitia” has been mixed. Theologians see its emphasis on conscience as foreshadowing new developments in moral theology. It has generally been welcomed by the laity. Douthat himself admits that the resistance to Francis is small, more a battle among elites than with the grassroots of Catholicism. A minority of bishops and younger priests remain critics, while many bishops in the United States, concerned about the unity of their dioceses, have remained silent. Others are positive, including Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

As James Keenan, S.J., of Boston College, says in a forthcoming book, bishops and cardinals together with theologians in Argentina, Austria, France, Germany, Italy and South Africa have taken creative steps to share “Amoris Laetitia” with their people. Cardinal Schönborn of Vienna calls for patience, noting that reception usually takes years. Pope Francis himself, speaking of the efforts of the faithful to live out the Gospel, says simply, “We have been called to form consciences, not replace them.”

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., is the T. Marie Chilton Professor of Catholic Theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. His most recent book is *The Slow Work of God* (Paulist Press).



Photo: America/Antonio De Loera-Brust

Inheritors of loss

A story of overcoming loss, rather than being “lessened or left behind” because of it, Andrew Krivák’s *The Signal Flame* chronicles three generations of the Vinich family, settlers in Dardan, Pa., an enclave for Slovakian immigrants. Krivák, a National Book Award finalist for his first novel, *The Sojourn*, writes with a careful attention to detail that should resonate with descendants of immigrant cultures and nations.

The impact on the family of a soldier, Sam Konar, who is missing in action in Vietnam, drives the story. We meet his mother, Hannah, brother Bo and his pregnant fiancée, Ruth, all grieving, wondering and worrying in their own ways. Whether, when and how they help one another find solace and closure is at the heart of the story. Clannish tensions provide a complicating backdrop

as Bo struggles with the uncertainty of Sam’s M.I.A. status while also trying to understand and reconcile a broader family history.

Crucially important is the role faith plays in the novel, with the ministry of the parish priest, Father Rovnáva, offering characters the chance and necessity to consider their relationship to God as he presides, too often, at funerals: “And I realized...that the man of sorrow was still a man of faith, for he believed that what God had created had a beauty that would withstand all loss.”

The strength of Krivák’s writing is its familiarity. Indeed, his language is a reminder of how people, be they siblings, friends, sons and fathers, mothers and sons or sons and lovers, truly communicate with each other, in word or gesture: “For the next two years Bo came to know something of his father.

Bo walked with him in the woods, walks on which there were long stretches of silence that Bo wanted to fill with questions but dared not.”

The story of Sam’s military experience is also told with a restraint and sensitivity that successfully maintain the drama of his M.I.A. status while focusing the story on the sorrow and loneliness of those who most deeply miss him: his brother, fiancée and mother.

A beautiful and elegiac history of pressing on, *The Signal Flame* asks readers to think of gifts given and losses almost impossible to fathom—and to acknowledge how and why such gifts may perhaps outweigh any losses.

Paul Almonte is a professor and chairperson of the English department at Saint Peter’s University in Jersey City, N.J.

A journey of healing

In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus and his disciples are leaving Jericho and on their way to Jerusalem when they hear a blind beggar named Bartimaeus cry out, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Called forth and asked what he wants, the blind man tells Jesus, “My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus tells him, “Go, your faith has made you well,” and immediately Bartimaeus regains his sight and follows Jesus on the way.

The subtitle to Roc O’Connor’s friendly, astute and therapeutic book is *What the Story of Blind Bartimaeus Teaches Us About Fear, Surrender and Walking the Path to Joy*. O’Connor notes that “[b]lindness serves here as a metaphor for the all-too-human

unwillingness to recognize whatever wounds, hurts and diseases keep us from recognizing God, ourselves, and others.”

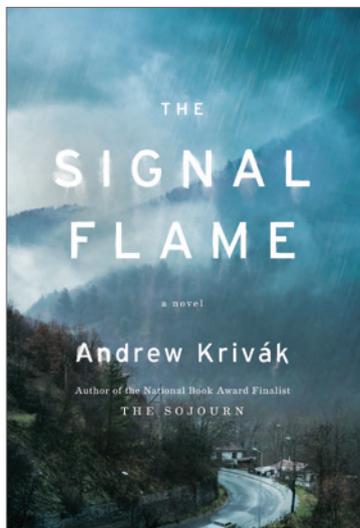
To aid in that recognition, O’Connor looks closely at the Greek text of Mark, noticing that the Greek used for “blind,” or *tupholos*, relates mostly to idolatry, oppression and willfulness. The word used for “seeing” is *anablepo*, which generally is associated with a return to covenant fidelity. “Seeing means following Jesus’ way; it signifies salvation, which involves losing one’s life, surrendering one’s possessiveness, letting go one’s demand to rule, and walking with Jesus to the cross...and receiving the healing of his resurrection.”

We collaborate with God’s grace and find conformity with Christ, O’Connor reminds us, by acknowledg-

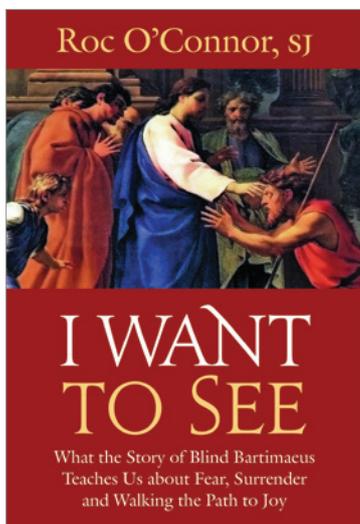
ing our creaturehood, our temptations, our distractions and expectations, our doubts, our grudges, our compulsions, and by allowing “Christ to pray for us, with us, and in us.” Our consolation should always be that “[t]here is nothing in our lives that God cannot use as a means of salvation.”

The journey of the blind beggar illustrates a healthy way to personal growth: from self-awareness to a request for help, to a gracious reception of healing and then to following the healer. In this wise, consoling and accepting book, O’Connor lays out how Bartimaeus’s path to joy, hope and peace is available to each of us.

Ron Hansen is a novelist and a professor at Santa Clara University.



The Signal Flame
By Andrew Krivák
Simon & Schuster. 272p \$26



I Want to See
What the Story of Blind Bartimaeus
Teaches Us About Fear, Surrender
and Walking the Path to Joy
By Roc O'Connor
Twenty-Third Publications. 128p
\$14.95

Esteemed women of the early church

Most of our understanding of the role of women in early Christianity comes from literary testimony, largely written by men. With *Crispina and Her Sisters*, Christine Schenk, C.S.J., has performed a singular service in making accessible additional sources about early Christian women. Not herself an archeologist, the author draws on the work of notable scholars like Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., and Janet Tulloch. She has immersed herself in both the physical record of early Christian women and the scholarship that has sought to interpret what has survived through the centuries, and she brings her own insights to bear as well.

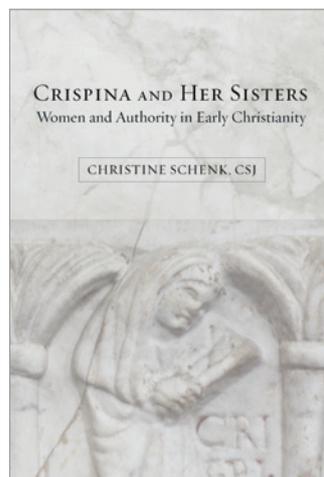
Schenk first offers the reader an overview of the sociocultural place of women in the first centuries of Christianity and the efforts to control and suppress the voice of women in the community. She then examines the evidence offered by burial artifacts of prominent female Christians, particularly from the fourth century (the Crispina of the title is one such person). She shows how the visual imagery in catacomb frescoes and funeral sarcophagi, which were created by both men and women to honor prominent believing women, offer a counterpoint to the attempts to make women invisible. A very detailed study of funerary depictions of Christian women makes clear that many of these women were esteemed as interpreters and teachers of God's word—at the very time when written texts testified to the official view that such could not be their role.

Drawing on physical artifacts principally stored in Rome, as well as the available scholarship, Schenk reviews these

burial images in search of important clues about the significance of the women. There are Christian elements like the Chi-Rho symbol for Christ and images of Peter or Paul; a figure is pictured with arms outstretched in the praying (*orans*) position; or there are other elements present that suggest a learned woman, including scrolls, codices and baskets for holding scrolls. One of Schenk's striking findings is that there are many more portraits of individual women on Christian sarcophagi than of men.

The volume also offers 14 appendices of a very technical nature. They bolster Schenk's contention that we need to radically transform our understanding of Christian women as authority figures in the early centuries, given the esteem in which they were held for their roles as teachers and interpreters of God's word.

Brian O McDermott, S.J., is a systematic theologian and special assistant to the president of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



Crispina and Her Sisters
Women and Authority in Early
Christianity
By Christine Schenk, C.S.J.
Fortress Press. 480p \$29

Getting Latino life—and religion—right in ‘One Day at a Time’

By Olga Segura

“My parents came over from Cuba in 1962 during Operation Pedro Pan,” Gloria Calderón Kellett tells me. Her Netflix series “One Day at a Time,” which follows a Cuban-American family in Los Angeles, was inspired by her own life. “My parents and a bunch of other Cubans were sent to Portland, Ore., where the Catholic communities there supported them and helped them get on their feet.”

In the United States, Ms. Calderón’s family rebuilt their lives, first in Portland and later in California, where she attended Loyola Marymount University. “I loved the shows I saw growing up, ‘Family Ties’ and ‘Growing Pains’ and ‘The Cosby Show,’” she says. “None of those were about a Latino family, but I could see myself in those families.” Eventually, she decided that it was time to write about her own Cuban family.

She received a call from Norman Lear, who produced the original 1970s series that Ms. Calderón’s show is loosely based on. After meeting with Lear, she felt she could trust him to tell her

family’s story. Ms. Calderón joined Lear along with Mike Royce, who worked on “Everybody Loves Raymond” and “Men of a Certain Again,” to bring the series to Netflix.

The show brings audiences into the life of a single, Cuban-American mother, Penelope Alvarez (Justina Machado), living with her family in Los Angeles. Penelope, a former Army medic dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, is raising her daughter Elena (Isabella Gómez) and her son Alex (Marcel Ruiz) with help from her mother Lydia (Rita Moreno).

One of the most refreshing parts of the show is its treatment of Catholicism. The Alvarez household is full of religious imagery. In one of the most touching scenes in Season 1, Lydia admits to Penelope that she is not comfortable with Elena’s sexuality because it goes against church teaching. “Although God did make us in his image. And God doesn’t make mistakes,” she says. “And when it comes to the gays, the pope did say, ‘Who am I to judge?’ And the pope

represents God. So, what, am I going to go against the pope and God? Who the hell do I think I am?”

Much of the show’s treatment of Catholicism is due to Ms. Calderón’s own upbringing. She grew up in a devout Catholic family, with positive examples of faith and leadership both within and outside the church.

Another important theme in “One Day at a Time” is mental health. Issues like depression, P.T.S.D. and generalized anxiety disorder are common within the Latino community, yet less than 15 percent of U.S. Latinos will speak with a mental health specialist. For many Latino families coming to the United States, Ms. Calderón believes, these issues are rarely recognized, and if they are, they are not prioritized.

“When you’re an immigrant and you’re coming in and you’re fighting so many things, you’re worried about feeding your family and paying your bills,” she says. “You don’t have the luxury of also worrying about your mental health.”

The Netflix show brings audiences into the life of a single, Cuban-American mother living with her family in Los Angeles.

Highlighting Penelope's post-traumatic stress disorder on the series, she tells me, was an opportunity to focus on an issue that is still heavily stigmatized in Latino communities, adding that it is a chance to "start a conversation within Latino families and within the community about how we can better support one another."

Ms. Calderón hopes that she can continue to change the industry for future female and Latino showrunners. "We get to set the record straight a little bit, even though we're just a little TV show," she tells me. "When we do events, people come up to us afterwards and thank us so much.... This one woman said, 'I didn't realize that I needed to see a can of Goya and a *cafetera* until I saw it—it made me cry. I was so confused. Why am I crying? It's just a *cafetera*. But I'd never seen it before onscreen.'"

Olga Segura, *associate editor*.
Twitter: @OlgaMSegura.

High school hijinks in Northern Ireland

Tanks of soldiers carrying heavy artillery circle the wall surrounding the city of Derry in Northern Ireland. While the local news reports that another bomb was found attached to a bridge and has brought the city to a standstill, 16-year-old Erin Quinn is inconsolable because her cousin Orla has been reading her diary.

Such is the life of a teenager. Such is life in wartime. It's just another day for Derry girls.

"Derry Girls" is a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age sitcom from the writer and producer Lisa McGee that follows Erin (Saoirse-Monica Jackson), Orla (Louisa Harland) and their pals as they navigate their way through Catholic high school during the the Troubles. ("Derry Girls" is currently airing on Channel 4 in Ireland; no word yet when it will be available for a U.S. audience.)

Derry, one of the few cities in Northern Ireland with a Catholic majority, wound up figuring prominently in the historical narrative of the Troubles. The city's notoriety is due in no small part to the events of Bloody Sunday on Jan. 30, 1972, when during a protest march British soldiers shot at 26 unarmed civil-

ian protesters, killing 13. It is in this war-torn landscape that we encounter the Derry girls, undeterred and seemingly oblivious to the tensions surrounding them as they enthusiastically go about their teenage existence. The viewer sees the absurdity of their teenage obliviousness, but we also see the bigger picture.

The Catholicism of the show is neither reverent nor hostile but instead—as it is in most predominantly Catholic communities—a ubiquitous entity whose presence waxes and wanes depending upon the situation. "Derry Girls" has been one of the biggest success stories of this still-young television year, a success that McGee has attributed in an interview with *The Irish Times* primarily to nostalgia.

On the contrary, it would seem that nostalgia has little to do with the show's power, and in truth, "Derry Girls" is not of another time but very much of this time. It teaches us how to live through the chaos of the bigger picture by navigating our way through our many smaller pictures.

Jake Martin, *S.J.*, *special contributor*.
Twitter: @jakemartin74.



The Catholicism of "Derry Girls" is neither reverent nor hostile.

Credit: Image courtesy of Channel 4

Sent to Show Mercy

Readings: Acts 4:32-35, Ps 118, 1 Jn 5:1-6, Jn 20:19-31

Early Christians knew that they were different. Each literary strand of the New Testament speaks of a mysterious force that propelled the Christian community to success even in the face of intimidating obstacles. This force gave authority to speech and success to works. It strongly resembled the Spirit that had motivated Jesus, and Christians came to realize they now shared in that same Spirit. It was a gift from Jesus to his disciples that allowed them to continue his mission.

John the Evangelist was especially interested in the Spirit. He first presents it as the bond of love between the Father and the Son (1:32). It was the power that gave authority to Jesus' preaching and deeds, and the power that would save him from death (6:63). At his death, Jesus handed the Spirit back to his Father, the source of all life (19:30). In today's Gospel passage, Jesus, risen in the power of the Spirit, shares this gift with his disciples and, by implication, with believers of every generation.

In today's first reading, Luke provides three illustrations of the effects of the Spirit on the Christian community. First, the apostles, speaking with power, convinced many people that Jesus had risen from the dead. Just as important was the lack of poverty in the early community; the Spirit led the wealthy to act with extraordinary mercy toward others. Finally, the Spirit was the source of peace, forging a community "of one heart and mind."

In the second reading, John speaks of the Spirit's transformation of the individual. John knew the obstacles that Christians faced, but he also knew that those who maintained their faith through such difficulties overcame them. Jesus had promised to send the Spirit, and faith kept the memory of that promise alive. In difficult times, those who kept faith found that, like Jesus, they were children of God, who could face even death.

In the first part of today's Gospel reading, John reaches the end of his narrative of the Spirit. Jesus shared the Spirit with the apostles and directed them to use it for the forgiveness of sins. With the Spirit, the apostles were able to speak with divine authority. They could forgive offenses

'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' (Jn 20:21)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How has the Spirit transformed you?

How has Jesus called you to continue his mission of mercy?

against God on God's behalf. This ministry continues today both in the church, through the sacrament of reconciliation, and among individual Christians when they forgive and perform works of mercy.

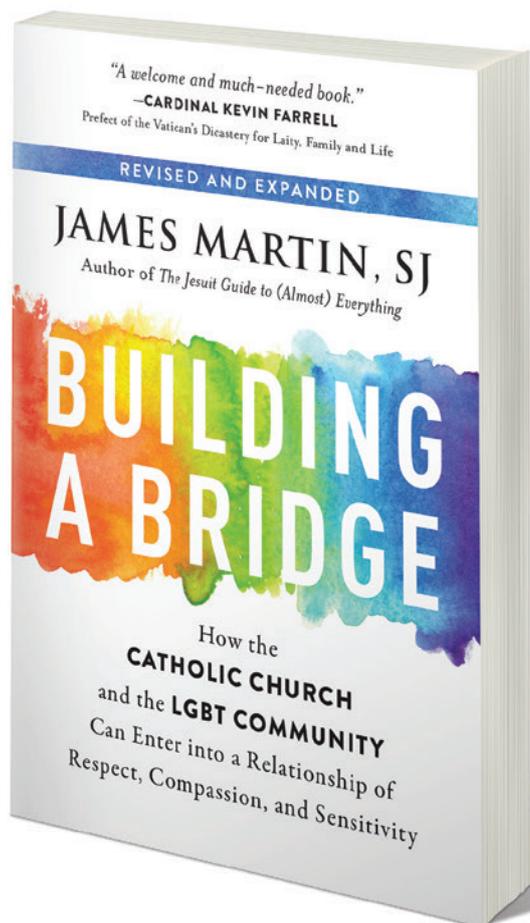
In the second part of the Gospel reading, Jesus chides Thomas for his slowness of faith, but he also shows that he is able to overcome Thomas's doubts and bring him to belief. At various times in history, Christians have used this Gospel to defend the use of material things like sacramentals, pilgrimages, icons or other religious art. Christ is willing to use things that are seen to strengthen us when we are weak in faith. Those of us who through baptism continue his mission in the Spirit must remember that as individuals and as church, we are icons of Christ. The world must see in us the same merciful Christ who appeared to the apostles. Then from us they can learn of Christ's mission and perform great works with his Spirit.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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Free to Forgive

Readings: Acts 3:13-19, Ps 4, 1 Jn 2:1-5, Lk 24:35-48

Throughout the centuries, Jesus' teaching on forgiveness has been difficult for Christians to live out. To forgive as God forgives might appear intuitively correct, but the sheer difficulty of doing this causes many to stumble. This is well illustrated in the classic film "The Nun's Story," in which a religious sister leaves her community in part because she cannot bring herself to forgive the man who killed her father during the war.

This difficulty receives a more recent treatment in the Netflix series "The Crown," when Queen Elizabeth seeks advice from the Rev. Billy Graham in the matter of her uncle's unrepentant collaboration with the Nazis during World War II. Graham at first does not back down from his insistence that she forgive, but after measuring the strength of her resistance, he invites her instead to beg forgiveness for her own lack of mercy and to pray for the man whom she cannot forgive. Although both narratives are fictional, they highlight both the beauty of the divine ideal and the difficulty of living it out in the face of worldly realities.

'Peace be with you.'
(Lk 24:36)



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

When you struggle to forgive, what holds you back?

How can Christ's promise of eternal life free you to forgive?

In what ways can you help others find the same freedom?

Hints throughout the New Testament suggest that the first Christians also found this teaching difficult. In this week's second reading, John, who believes that Christians must love others as Jesus loved them, has no trouble dismissing those who do not forgive as utter frauds (see also 1 Jn 4:20). Luke writes his Gospel to confirm that the teachings his audience had received were in fact the true teachings of Jesus. "I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence...so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received" (1:3-4). He structured his Gospel around several themes that spoke to the issues troubling his community. One major theme among these issues is forgiveness. Only Luke gives us parables like that of the two debtors (7:41-43) or the prodigal son (15:11-32). Only in Luke's Gospel does Jesus forgive those who crucified him. In Luke's mind, Jesus' command to forgive included no conditions or exceptions.

Forgiveness is a major theme in Luke's account of Jesus' passion. As Luke reflects on Jesus' death, he discerns a call for human acceptance of divine mercy. In this Sunday's first reading, for example, Peter teaches that the suffering and death of Jesus, as foretold in the prophets, opened up a path for the salvation of all. "Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away" (Acts 3:19). Luke's resurrection account, which appears in today's Gospel reading, takes up the theme from a different perspective. Jesus sends the apostles out so that "repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

In Luke's mind, asking for forgiveness is essential to the Christian life; calling others to do the same is crucial to evangelization. The light of the resurrection frees us from death's shadow, that fetid miasma from which hate, control, isolation, fear and pride creep forth. Our message is credible only when our words and example reveal that we are truly free to give to others the gift that God first gave us.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

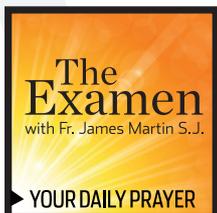
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The Ideology of Justin Trudeau

Freedom of religion is under attack in Canada

By Thomas Rosica



On Dec. 19, the department of the Canadian government known as Employment and Social Development Canada announced a major change to its requirements for groups seeking federal funding under its Canada Summer Jobs program for youth employment. The program provides federal funding to entities—including small businesses and nonprofits such as charitable organizations—that hire students during the summer. The change has set off a firestorm in Canada that continues to this day.

Applicants for the grants must now affirm that “both the job and the organization’s core mandate respect individual human rights,” including “reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.”

According to the department, the inclusion of language on reproductive rights (including “the right to access safe and legal abortions”), sexual orientation and gender identity or expression is intended to “prevent youth (as young as 15 years of age) from being exposed to employment within organizations that may promote positions that are contrary to the values enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and associated case law.”

Along with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Jewish and Muslim leaders have expressed alarm at these changes to the summer jobs

program. These faith communities in Canada consider sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and abortion as serious questions with ethical, moral, social and personal bearing. How we answer these questions determines our understanding of human dignity and the purpose and significance of human life. This new policy conflicts with the rights of these groups to freedom of religion and conscience.

The new requirement will have serious consequences: The services of many nonprofit organizations will be reduced; critical opportunities for young people to learn valuable work skills will be lost; even summer camps will close. These effects will be felt in faith communities across the nation. I am the chief executive officer of the Salt and Light Catholic Television Network in Canada, which has benefited in the past from these grants. We will also suffer the consequences of the loss of federal funding to employ young people this summer.

The Canadian government refers to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the basis for this new policy. But Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his advisors are misreading the Charter, which is supposed to protect citizens from being intimidated by the government. It is not intended to intimidate citizens.

Instead of focusing on what summer jobs would pay young people to do, Mr. Trudeau’s government has made an issue of what the organizations that apply for the funds believe. Wouldn’t it have

made more sense for the government to meet with faith groups and inform them that some past recipients of the grants have been problematic?

Several solutions have been proposed to allow groups to continue to apply for the jobs program. Some say, “Just check the attestation box; no one will ask questions.” Others suggest making an application for grants and adding a statement of alternative beliefs regarding the issues.

But many Canadians have decided to take a firm stand. We will not be bullied into the appearance of collusion on this most divisive issue. We cannot simply “check the box” and get on with life in order to benefit from the grants. By firmly saying no to Mr. Trudeau and his cohort, we also say no to any attempt to infringe on the freedoms of conscience and religion, of thought and belief, and of opinion and expression, as guaranteed by the Charter itself.

Mr. Trudeau and his colleagues have lost their moorings. They tout their liberal doctrine of diversity but in reality are agents of a new dictatorship of imposed ideologies. And ideology makes it impossible for people to confront individual issues on their own merits.

Thomas Rosica, C.S.B., is C.E.O. of the Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation in Canada. He served as English language Media Attaché at four Synods of Bishops (2008-2015) and also to the Holy See Press Office from 2013 to 2017.

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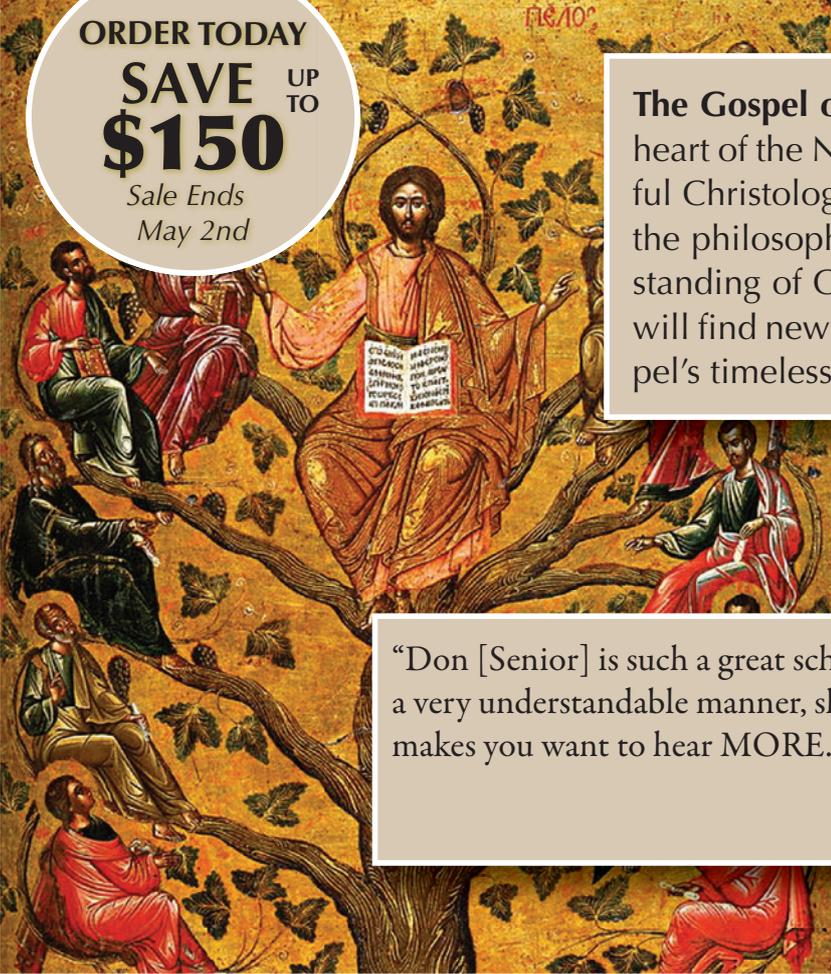


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