

America



APRIL 16, 2018

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

Latinos in the U.S. Church

A SPECIAL REPORT

Maria Luisa Torres
on Catholic Schools

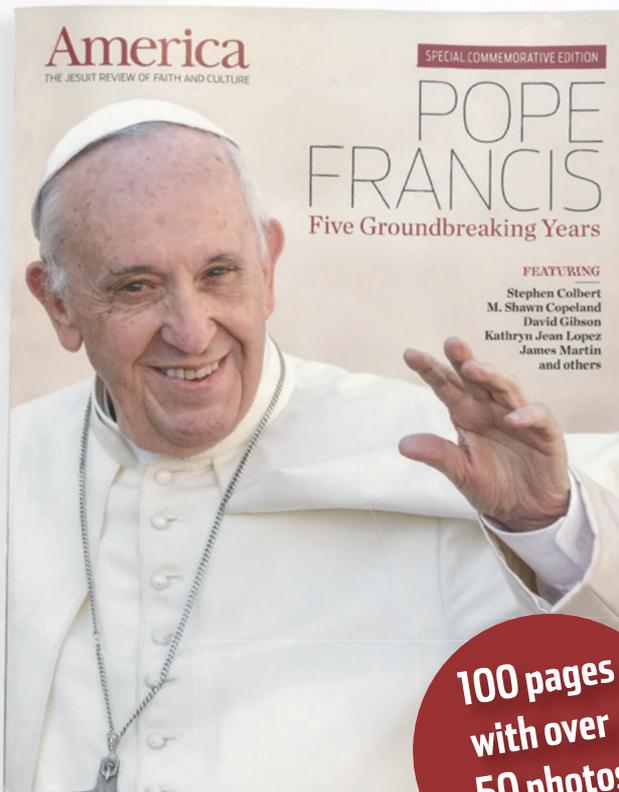
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The Avenue of the Americas

You could be forgiven for thinking that the title of this magazine refers to the United States, yet it does not. “The name **America**,” the editors wrote in the first editorial in 1909, “embraces both North and South America, in fact, all this Western Hemisphere.” From its founding, the name of this review has signified a social and political reality that transcends the borders of the United States. Our publisher, in fact, is the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. The flags of both Canada and the United States are prominently displayed in our office lobby, located, appropriately enough, on the Avenue of the Americas in New York City.

I mention all this because in common parlance “America” is often synonymous with “United States” and excludes our neighbors to the north and south. Perhaps this is just a homonymic accident, but I suspect that a collective myopia is also at work. That is unfortunate, for such shortsightedness prevents the United States from fulfilling the duties and seizing the opportunities that come from its membership in this hemispheric community. Those opportunities are great. As President John F. Kennedy once observed, the United States shares more than a land mass with our nearest neighbors. “This New World of ours,” he said in 1961, “is not a mere accident of geography. Our continents are bound together by a common history, the endless exploration of new frontiers.... And our people share a common heritage, the quest for the dignity and the freedom of man.”

That shared history and aspiration make the announcement that the Trump administration will end the program of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) all the more morally egregious

and in practice self-defeating. The so-called Dreamers came to this country through no choice of their own, brought here by parents who often feared for their lives. As a nation of immigrants, drawn from every quarter of the globe, the United States has a moral duty to ensure that the bridge of opportunity our forebears crossed is not burned behind us in a moment of panicked xenophobia. Historically speaking, the distinction between those who came legally and those who do not is today a distinction without a real difference. There were no laws against immigration from most countries for much of U.S. history. Saying that one’s forebears came legally is akin to saying that one’s grandfather is to be congratulated for not breaking the speed limit on the autobahn.

For Catholics, the obligation to welcome the stranger, who is in fact our neighbor, is even more compelling. “We are more responsible than our non-Catholic fellow citizens,” the editors wrote in that first editorial, “for the welfare of thousands of immigrants of our own religion who come to us weekly, and for their amalgamation into the national life.” This is as true today as it was then, not just because the new immigrants are our fellow Catholics but because the moral imperative of the Scriptures is so clear.

You could also be forgiven for thinking that the whole question of the role of Latinos in the life of the Catholic Church and the United States principally concerns the question of immigration. And yet it does not. Latinos “are [this country’s] latest immigrant wave to transform the country,” Antonio De Loera-Brust writes in this issue, “but some have lived in this land since before the United States existed.” Indeed, the first non-indigenous lan-

guage spoken in what became the United States was Spanish, not English, and two-thirds of Latino Catholics in the United States today were born in the United States. The Latino experience is not only about the future of the church, therefore, but its past and present as well. Yet too often members of the church think of the Latino experience strictly in terms of immigration, ignoring the equally difficult problems of overrepresentation in the criminal justice system and underrepresentation in the Catholic education system.

For these reasons the present issue of **America** kicks off a multiyear initiative in which we will examine the future of the church in the United States and how to incorporate Latino Catholics fully into ecclesial life. I am grateful to the private foundation that is funding this program and to our senior editor, J.D. Long-García, who is not only overseeing the editorial content related to this initiative but the series of events, videos and podcasts that are also a part of it. This initiative will also form a part of the ecclesial conversation taking place during the Fifth Encuentro Initiative sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“True to its name and to its character as a Catholic review,” the first editors wrote, “**America** will be cosmopolitan not only in contents but also in spirit.” Our hope is that America the country will also better understand its obligations to all those who reside within its borders and will begin anew to look beyond its borders, to those neighbors and friends who are, in a fundamental way, our fellow Americans.

—
Matt Malone, S.J.
Twitter: @americaeditor.



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The Archdiocese of Los Angeles Encuentro at the Pasadena Convention Center, Jan. 27

Cover Image: A Mass in honor of the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in San Diego, Calif., Dec. 9. (CNS photo/David Maung)

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How does your parish reach out to Hispanics in your community?

We received a wide variety of responses to our question about how parishes are reaching out to Hispanics, who now make up the majority of U.S. Catholics under age 18. The most common answer was that respondents' parishes offered Mass in Spanish, followed by parishes' celebration of feast days of importance to Hispanics (like the feast of La Virgen de Guadalupe) and religious education offerings in Spanish.

Readers whose parishes already engaged in outreach to Hispanics gave ideas for how to welcome this community better. "I would like to invite Hispanics and other minority groups to join the liturgy committee and other leadership groups so they are able to have a real say in the direction of the parish," said Julie Sutton of Canton, Ohio.

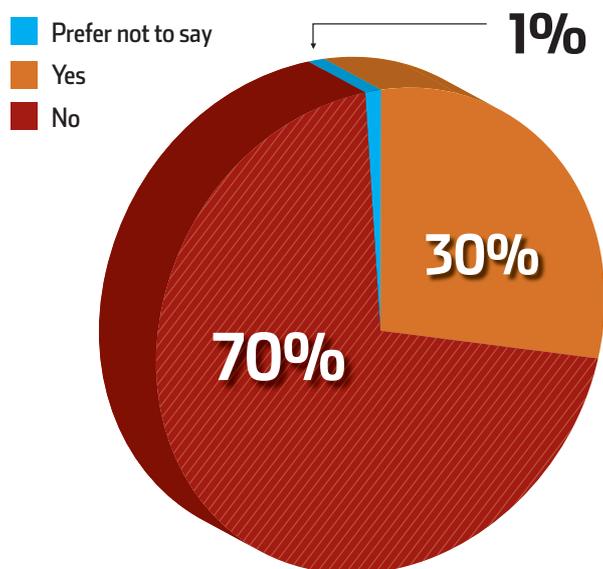
Yvette Fuentes of Miramar, Fla., told *America* that she hoped other parishes in her area would join her own parish's successful efforts. "My parish does an excellent job reaching out to Hispanics—we are a majority-minority

parish," she wrote. "What's sad is that several other area churches do not make Hispanics feel welcome."

Twenty-four of the 136 respondents said that their parishes made no efforts to reach out to Hispanics. Some expressed frustration at the lack of outreach. An anonymous reader from Marlboro, N.J., wrote: "My parish does nothing! Our pastor has commented about not wanting the Our Lady of Guadalupe icon at one point to avoid having 'those people' come to the church. It is no wonder Latinos flock to evangelical and Pentecostal churches."

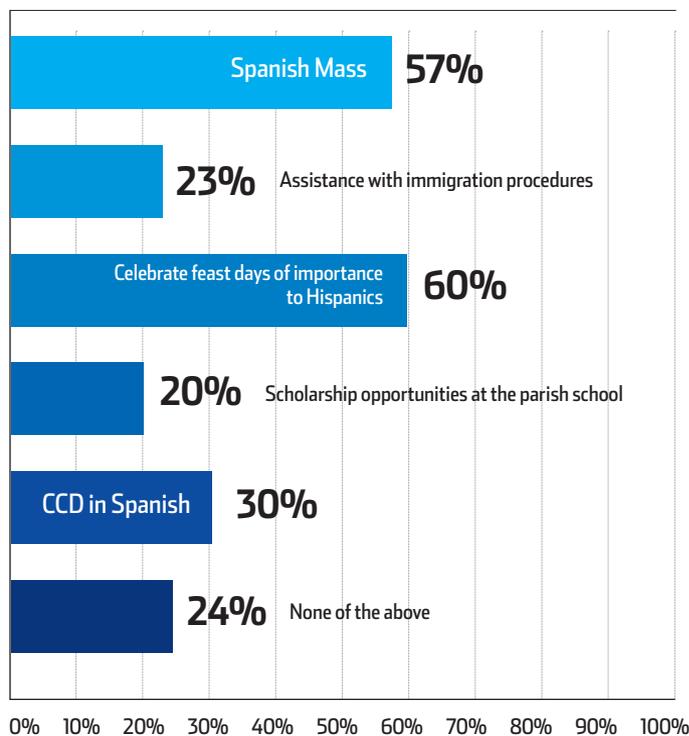
Many respondents in this camp said they hoped to see Spanish Mass available at their parishes in the future, in addition to priests hearing confession in Spanish and offering English lessons to parents. Sister Constance Marie Suchala of Toledo, Ohio, said she hoped to see her parish "connect Hispanics in the parish and help them to treasure their cultural traditions and to share them" with others.

Are you Hispanic?



"I would like more shared social events at my parish geared toward mutual, cultural learning. The current political environment and fear of deportation make this more challenging." — Michelle Tope, Dover, Ohio

How does your parish reach out to Hispanics in your community?



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.

The Right Direction

Re “Texas Bishops Cut Ties With Texas Right to Life,” by Paul Stinson (4/2): This is a small, positive step in the right direction. There are many pseudo-Catholic “pro-life” groups out there who are nothing but fronts for far-right political advocates. They falsely criticize anyone who doesn’t agree with their opinions, which have little if nothing to do with ending abortion. Groups like this make the pro-life movement look ridiculous and disingenuous.

Kristin Wiener

Online Comment

The Income Gap

Re “Motels and the Modern Face of Homelessness,” by Jim McDermott (4/2): This is another example of the income gap and how the middle class is dead. It appears there are two types of people in the world: those who need not look at the prices on the menu and those who cannot even afford to sit in the restaurant. It will get worse. Basic universal income is very complicated, but let us at least discuss the proposal going forward. Not to do so would be at our peril.

Christopher Lochner

Online Comment

Cradle Catholic and a Convert

Re “How Billy Graham Shaped American Catholicism,” by Jon M. Sweeney (4/2): It was 1964 at the Boston Garden when Billy Graham—with the blessing of Cardinal Cushing—preached to throngs of people seeking God. I was one of them. From that day to this I regularly describe myself as both a cradle Catholic and a convert. May Billy Graham be welcomed now to hobnob with his Lord and Savior as once he did with presidents and monarchs. God rest his soul.

Jack Feehily

Online Comment

Billy Graham and U.S. Catholics

I must demur from Jon Sweeney’s roseate view of Billy Graham’s impact on American Catholicism and vice versa.

In the half century I covered Graham as a journalist, both he and American Catholicism changed in important ways. So we must ask, which Graham and when? Graham began his career as a fundamentalist, which meant not only Biblical inerrancy but also a separation from forms of Christianity such as Catholicism. As a Southerner, Graham lived

mainly in areas of few, if any, Catholics and well into 1960 held the view that the United States is a Protestant country.

Sweeney fails to mention that Graham promised his friend and Democratic vice presidential nominee Lyndon Johnson that he would stay out of the 1960 election. We now know from several books—including my own, *Getting Religion*—that Graham secretly advised Richard Nixon on campaign strategy, including urging him to mobilize the Protestant vote.

Sweeney recalls how in 1950 Cardinal Cushing endorsed Graham—but that was news only because it was an anomaly. Again, Sweeney claims that Billy had “warm friendships with Catholic leaders,” though he mentions only Ted Hesburgh, C.S.C., Notre Dame’s longtime president.

Graham had two audiences, one as (in my words) a television entertainer—evangelism being a performance art—and the other as a reclamer of the backslid rather than a converter of the heathen. Catholics were a big part of that first audience, and if Graham had an influence on American Catholics it was most likely by lifting Catholics’ pulpit expectations, especially after the disappearance of Bishop Fulton Sheen from the tube.

Kenneth L. Woodward

Chicago, Ill.

The Evangelization You Call For

Re “When My Daughter Whispered to Me, ‘I Wish Girls Could Be Priests,’ I Didn’t Know What to Say,” by Barry Hudock (4/2): Mr. Hudock, this is a theologically well-balanced and nuanced article. Your reflections manifest the very evangelization you call for. I am confident this process of family evangelization will underscore the infinite dignity of each person in that universal Christian priesthood. Circumstances may prevent us from receiving particular gifts and ministries of God that touch our hearts, but the spirit of those gifts is never denied us and is within God’s providence.

Rhett Segall

Online Comment

Letters to the editor can be sent by email to letters@americamedia.org. Please include the article title, author and issue date, as well as your name and where you are writing from.

America First or One Among Many?

The Americas are one landmass. The fates of its states and its people are inseparable. America does not merely stretch from sea to shining sea, but from Cape Horn to the northern ice caps. The United States is not a nationalist island but one republic among others that share a vast continent. Indeed, in the first editorial of this magazine, the editors identified the name **America** with the entire Western Hemisphere.

So-called domestic decisions in the United States on deportation and drug policy and “foreign” political upheaval, corruption or crime generate interconnected and reverberating effects. Turmoil in Central America or Venezuela cannot be perceived as isolated phenomena when migrants and refugees from those countries arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border.

It is time for a new Good Neighbor policy. First deployed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930s, the Good Neighbor policy briefly achieved improved relations with many of the states in the Americas. But the aggressive interventionism propelled by the Cold War put an end to all that. The United States became not a good neighbor in the hemisphere but the bullying Tío Sam, bribing, manipulating and occasionally bludgeoning other states of the Americas into submission.

Focused on perceived threats and old rivals across the Atlantic and the Pacific, successive presidential administrations have at times ignored or misread both crises and opportunities closer to home in crafting U.S. continental policy. As the chronic needs of its neighbors in Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela and elsewhere became acute, the United

States has been torn between a desire to intervene and a desire to isolate itself.

As the Hispanic population of the United States grows in size and influence, the connections of culture, economy and family will further bind the peoples of the Americas. Already the frontier of what we could call modern Latin America has moved peacefully far north of the Rio Grande.

Los Angeles and Miami are not merely great U.S. cities, they are the northernmost metropolises of Latin America. That shift has been viewed by some with suspicion and alarm, but what if it could be appreciated instead as a historic opportunity?

There is a logic and an inevitability to this growing interconnectivity. The United States can resist this continental drift to the detriment of all the Americas or it can nurture and direct that integration in an honest and just dialogue with its neighbors. Creating new opportunities for trade, for example, and rationalizing labor flows across the continent through comprehensive immigration reform would better integrate economies and cultures of the north and south to the benefit of both.

Instead of building physical barriers or backing an authoritarian revival, the United States could revisit good neighborism, supporting economic and social development and offering assistance to combat crime and social chaos throughout the Americas. That program should begin by looking at how its own social failings and policies contribute to the lawlessness.

The United States has the opportunity now to do right by its Latin American neighbors, not just out of obvious self-interest but because in this neighborhood it has the biggest

house on the block. Only a few nations have the resources and expertise to lead such a continental revival. And if the United States does not step up like a good neighbor, other global players, notably China, will be tempted to do so.

The Voices of Parkland

“There are many ways to silence young people and make them invisible,” Pope Francis said to thousands of young people gathered in Rome for Mass on Palm Sunday. “[There are] many ways to anesthetize them, to make them keep quiet, ask nothing, question nothing.” For decades, young survivors and witnesses of gun violence in schools, cities and homes have been invisible bystanders in the intractable debate over gun control. But no longer.

On March 24, student survivors of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., led the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C., and over one million people marched in allied events across the country.

Survivors of school shootings, accidents and gang violence, as well as those who had lost loved ones to suicide, were represented and given a platform. The March for Our Lives included demonstrators from across the political spectrum, including gun owners and supporters of the Second Amendment. A number of Catholic schools and parishes were represented at the march, making the case that gun control is a pro-life issue.

Five years ago, the editors of

America called for a repeal of the Second Amendment, a position that has gained high-profile supporters on both sides of the aisle, most recently the former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens. The demands of the organizers of the March for Our Lives were more modest measures that have the support of the majority of Americans, including a ban on assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines and universal background checks for gun sales. Parkland students have also called for more funds for school security and for mental health research and services.

Critics of these protests have characterized the young voices of the movement as opportunistic, even demagogic. But students using the media and impassioned testimonies to mobilize voters and influence lawmakers are not circumventing democracy. They are doing exactly what the National Rifle Association has done for years—to great success. That young people are stepping up to close the voter enthusiasm gap on the issue of guns is nothing if not small-d democratic. Their voices have been heard. Now is the time for action from lawmakers.

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The only Latino in the room

A few months after President Trump moved into the White House, a study conducted by the nonprofit research group Media Matters concluded that the morning shows on cable news channels continued to skew white and male when it came to guests.

According to the analysis by Cristina López G., of the 2,862 guests on the three major morning news shows (CNN's "New Day," MSNBC's "Morning Joe" and "Fox & Friends") in January and February of last year, 85 percent were non-Latino white and 77 percent were male, with little difference among the three networks. Only 8 percent of the guests were black, and 3.5 percent were Latino; less than 3 percent were Asian. These pitiful representation numbers fly in the face of the country's actual demographics. According to the latest Census data, the U.S. population is only 61 percent white (and not Hispanic or Latino), with 18 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino, 13 percent identifying as black and 6 percent identifying as Asian. (Also notable: Despite the Middle East being a frequent topic on news programs, less than 3 percent of guests were of Middle Eastern heritage.)

It seems that changing demographics have not yet led to any real change in cable news's diversity embarrassment—and I see no real sign that TV news executives will wake up to this, especially during the age of Trump. A diversity of opinion is the standard when it comes to white males reacting to news items in a roundtable talk, but members of marginalized groups are often alone

on panels and are expected to represent everyone in their racial or ethnic or religious category.

In my case, this is known as "being the only Latino in the room."

Being the only Latino means that while the white men get to disagree with each other and develop idiosyncratic or counterintuitive arguments, you can never just say how you feel or what you think about a story. Instead, you always have to frame your comments in a way that responds to the needs of the 56.5 million people who share some part of your identity.

It is a lot of pressure to represent a community that many think of as having one viewpoint. Latinos in the United States are as complex as the 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries they represent. (Yes, I am counting you, Brazil and Haiti.) Not all of us speak Spanish. Not all of us speak English. Not all of us are first-generation immigrants. Not all of us can trace our families' generations in this country to the time before European conquerors came to the Western Hemisphere in the name of white supremacy, religion and greed.

Being Latino in the 21st century has its own deep complexities that many non-Latinos in the United States never get to really see. They may see one Latino on a cable news panel, but in an overwhelmingly white and male television news landscape, they never see two or even three Latinos tease out how class, race and inequality play a role in major national debates on immigration and other issues.

A diversity of opinion does not seem to matter when it comes to Latinos on English-language TV. We do not see the Latino arguing for the "rule of law" in immigration policy debate with a Latino who wants immigration reform to bring undocumented residents out of the shadows. We do not see the Mexican businessman who advocates for free trade engaging the Mexican-American activist for workers' rights.

This is what is missing now in the current focus on Trump Republicans and Resistance Democrats. Nuance is too much for the "border wall or no border wall" TV news executives. Why not change the narrative so more U.S. Latino and Latin American voices can add more layers to the conversation?

In a TV news world that is still mostly white and male, more inclusion may be seen as a threat to those who advanced their career under the old rules. But it is time to bring new players into the game.

Julio Ricardo Varela is the co-host of the Webby-nominated "In The Thick" podcast, a contributor to Latino USA and the founder of LatinoRebels.com. Twitter: @julito77.

From Benedict to Francis:

A Jesuit Reflects on Serving Two Popes

Tuesday, May 15, 2018 | 6 p.m.

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In his first address to an American audience since retiring as Vatican spokesman, the **Rev. Federico Lombardi, S.J.**, examines the contrasts between Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis—but also the deep continuities that are often overlooked.

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FOR THE CHURCH AND U.S. SOCIETY, A LATINO FUTURE

By Antonio De Loera-Brust

They are America's second largest ethnic group, but have no common racial identity. They are America's latest immigrant wave to transform the country, but some have lived in this land since before the United States existed. They have gone by many names—Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, even the awkward and bureaucratic “Spanish-Surnamed Americans.” But regardless of what they are called, people of various Latin American origins are living in and changing the United States.

The most important distinction among Latinos is national origin. According to the 2010 census, 63 percent of the U.S. Latino population is of Mexican origin, dwarfing all other groups. The runners-up are Puerto Ricans, at 9.2 percent, with Cubans and Salvadorans coming next at 3.5 and 3.2 percent. There are distinct patterns of regional set-

tlement. The Pew Research Center found that while Mexican-origin people make up the overwhelming majority of the Latino population in California, Latinos of Dominican or Puerto Rican origin are the largest groups in New York.

The diversity of national origins contributes to the lack of a more powerful Latino cultural or political voice in the United States. While there are many overarching cultural similarities in all of Latin America, notably a historical attachment to Catholicism, different Latino groups bring different cultures and face dramatically different experiences in the United States.

Nowhere are these differences more evident than in the migration histories of these groups. Since 1961, two years after the Cuban revolution, Cuban-Americans have mostly been welcomed as refugees from communism.

In sharp contrast to the welcome given other Latino immigrant groups, under the “wet foot, dry foot” policy, Cubans who made it to U.S. shores were given legal residency and a path to citizenship. (Those picked up on the ocean, even in the surf, were returned to Cuba.) But Hondurans and other Central American nationals have been turned back despite the fact that their home nations regularly appear at the top of the list of the world’s most dangerous countries.

The politics of immigration plays a large role in the U.S. Latino community, especially for Mexican-Americans. The undocumented population of the United States is 76 percent Latino. Twenty-eight percent of all immigrants in the United States are Mexican; around half of these are undocumented. The majority live in U.S. territory that used to make up the northern half of Mexico.

Among DACA recipients, 79.4 percent are Mexican immigrants. The now-embattled program has had a positive impact on its overwhelmingly Latino recipients. Mixed-status families, in which one or more parents are undocumented but which include one or more children who are U.S. citizens, are common in the U.S. Latino experience. Between 2010 and 2012, 23 percent of deportations removed the parent of a U.S. citizen.

In contrast to Mexicans, Puerto Ricans are free to come and go to the mainland because of their status as U.S. citizens. Despite this freedom, one unknown to other Latino groups, Puerto Ricans have struggled over the question of independence or statehood. The urgency of the issue has been underscored by the experience of many Puerto Ricans after the devastation left by Hurricane Maria and the U.S. government’s ineffective response.

Yet all these dynamics are changing. Despite their large numbers overall, migration from Mexico is in decline. Today, Central Americans from the so-called Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are the fastest growing Latino group in the United States. And the comparably easy path to citizenship that defined the Cuban experience for decades was ended by President Obama as part of his effort to normalize relations with Cuba.

Now even some Cubans are entering the United States as undocumented immigrants. Emma González, the Parkland shooting survivor advocating for gun control, may be a better representative of the future of Cuban-American

politics than Senator Marco Rubio. And while Latinos are long associated with East Coast cities, Florida and the former Mexican territories in the Southwest, the largest Latino population growth is actually occurring in the rest of the South, while the three counties showing the largest percentage growth in the U.S. Latino population between 2007 and 2014 were in North Dakota.

Shared experiences contribute to a uniquely American understanding of Latino identity. Despite the headlines and reports on undocumented immigrants or the beliefs of some of the fans of the border wall proposed by the president, the largest source of growth in the U.S. Latino population is not immigration, but births in the United States. Over one third of all U.S. Latinos are still under 18; six in 10 are younger than 33. In an otherwise aging population, the Latinos of the United States are a young people. America’s Latinos are also increasingly assimilated, with record numbers speaking English, a trend driven by the young.

Discrimination and achievement gaps persist. Despite recent progress, Latinos continue to have the highest high school dropout rates out of any major ethnic group. A Pew survey found that even as Latinos question their future in the United States under the Trump administration, most of them identified education, not immigration, as the most important political issue to them.

Latinos are underrepresented in national politics. Though they represent over 17 percent of the population, Latinos make up just 8.4 percent of members of Congress. Yet that number, too, is slowly changing, with more Latino “firsts” in politics every election cycle, from Massachusetts to Virginia to Kansas, and more on the horizon, notably in the Latino-heavy districts of California and Texas.

Within the Catholic Church, Latinos are on the path to becoming the new majority; among Catholics under 30, 52 percent are Latino. That is why the geographic center of the church in the United States, long located in the Northeastern and Midwestern cities where Irish, German, Italian and Polish immigrants settled, is moving south and west, toward the U.S. Latino heartlands.

In a way, the demographic movement is a restoration of what once was. Catholicism was first brought to what is now the United States by Spanish-speaking people, and many of the cities of the Southwest built by Spaniards, Mexicans and indigenous people—Santa Fe, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Antonio among them—were built around

Catholic parishes and missions. That Catholic Hispanic heritage rivals the Anglo history most U.S. schoolchildren are taught.

But despite the apparent vibrancy of Catholic Latinos, there are also worrying signs. Pew reports that the number of Latinos who identified as Catholic fell 12 percent in just four years, from 67 percent in 2010 to 55 percent in 2014. Many convert to Protestant denominations; many, especially the young, are leaving religion altogether.

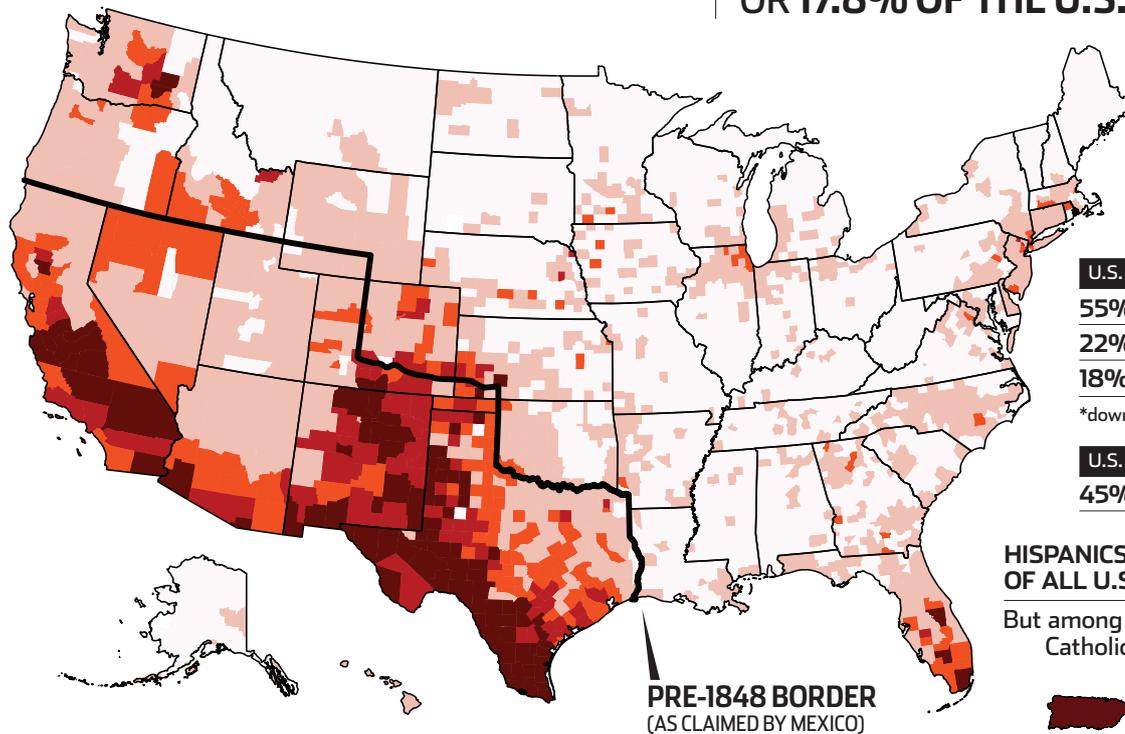
For the church, then—and the broader U.S. society, from its media to its political system—opening up oppor-

tunities for Latinos will be critical to institutional success over the 21st century. The presence and continued growth of Latinos in the United States is a demographic reality. Regardless of how they entered the country or where they came from, Latinos are here now, participating in and contributing to life in the United States. And Latinos are here to stay.

Antonio De Loera-Brust, *Joseph A. O'Hare fellow.*
Twitter: @AntonioDeLoeraB.

HISPANICS IN THE UNITED STATES

PERCENTAGE CLAIMING HISPANIC/LATINO HERITAGE (BY COUNTY)



58 MILLION U.S. RESIDENTS CLAIM HISPANIC/LATINO HERITAGE OR 17.8% OF THE U.S. POPULATION

U.S. HISPANICS ARE: (2013)

55%	Catholic*
22%	Protestant
18%	unaffiliated

*down from 67% in 2010

U.S. HISPANICS UNDER 30

45%	Catholic
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HISPANICS REPRESENT 33% OF ALL U.S. CATHOLICS

But among all U.S. Hispanics raised Catholic, only 69% still identify with the church

DEMOGRAPHICS

	TOTAL U.S.	HISPANIC/LATINO
MEDIAN AGE	37.9	28.4
COLLEGE GRADUATES	30.3%	15.3%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$55,322	\$44,254

U.S. HISPANIC POPULATION BY NATIONAL ORIGIN (METRO AREAS)

	MEXICAN	PUERTO RICAN	CUBAN	SALVADORAN
LOS ANGELES	79	1	7	1
NEW YORK CITY	14	27	3	5
MIAMI	6	9	43	1
WASHINGTON, DC	15	7	2	33

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (2017 for total Hispanic population, 2016 for more detailed data); metro area data from Pew Research Center (2016); religious data from "The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States" (2014), Pew Research Center.

Activists go underground; U.N. reports on excessive force in Honduras

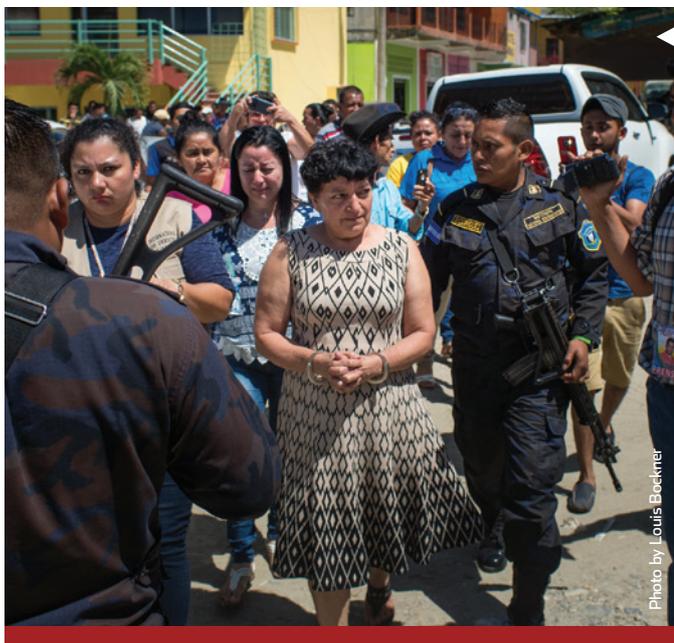


Photo by Louis Boekner

Aquilina Guerra is released on Feb. 26 after she was charged, fraudulently say supporters, with “storing weapons of war.”

The police produced a bag, which Ms. Guerra said she had never seen before, with small cans of gunpowder, a container of gasoline and some empty soda bottles. The police alleged that Ms. Guerra was making Molotov cocktails. She was charged with storing weapons of war.

Outside the jail where she was being held on Feb. 26, Mass was celebrated for the more than 200 people who came to show their support.

“The church is called to be prophetic,” said the Rev. Victor Cámara, who heads up the social ministry of the Diocese of La Ceiba. “Those who believe are called to denounce injustice, and we are here from the church to show the church will not be silenced... May God hear the cries of the Honduran people who have suffered so much.”

The following day, over 100 people gathered outside the courthouse singing, praying and denouncing Ms. Guerra’s arrest. After eight hours of hearings and deliberations, the judge presiding over the case ruled that there was not sufficient evidence to continue the case against Ms. Guerra.

“It makes you want to cry—to see justice being served,” said the Rev. Javier Hernández, the parish priest at Our Lady of Pilar. “I think the public pressure from those here has strength. Prayers, the Eucharist that we shared yesterday, people asking God for justice. God is listening, listens to his people clamoring for justice for those who have been criminalized.”

“I feel very happy seeing my community here, how I love them and how they love me,” said Ms. Guerra outside the courthouse following her release. “I never could have imagined this experience, but God has always been with me. It’s been painful to see my people suffer. This is a political persecution simply for supporting the movement. My husband and I have supported poor, humble people. I never expected this. But thanks to God, I’m free and I’m going home.”

“May this not only be for Aquilina but for so many who have been criminalized and who are being persecuted and unjustly jailed,” said Father Hernández. “May this be a new beginning for peace in Honduras.”

Jackie McVicar writes from Tegucigalpa, Honduras.
Twitter: @pajarolindo.

In the months since the widely criticized presidential elections in Honduras in November, threats and harassment against social and political activists have ramped up, according to the U.N. High Commission on Human Rights.

A report, “Human Rights Violations in the Context of the 2017 Honduran Elections,” published on March 12, charges that the state of emergency ordered by President Juan Orlando Hernández after the election was too broad and imprecise, “leading to massive and indiscriminate arrests, resulting in limiting the right to peaceful assembly and association.” The report documents cases of extrajudicial murders committed by police, illegal house raids and threats and harassment against journalists.

Violent attacks like those outlined in the U.N. report in recent weeks have targeted community activists defending their rivers and mountains from mining and development interests along the country’s northern coast. After two fellow activists were killed by security forces in January, Luis García decided not to ignore death threats this time. He left Honduras on Feb. 21. The next day national police raided his home.

Unable to locate Mr. García, the police took his wife, Aquilina Guerra, into custody in nearby Tela. Ms. Guerra is a 57-year-old housewife and a former catechist and cook for Our Lady of Pilar parish in the municipality of Arizona in the Honduran department of Atlántida. She spends most of her days caring for her grandchildren and making food for her family.

'Elimination' of Down syndrome is a 'great hate crime'

Iceland is close to “eradicating” Down syndrome because a large number of women are aborting children diagnosed in utero with the condition. Other countries are pursuing similar ends.

The Holy See gathered panelists at the United Nations in New York on March 20 to speak against abortions performed because of anticipated disabilities and against what one speaker called “the greatest hate crime of this generation”—namely, the termination of pregnancies when Down syndrome is indicated.

“Here at the United Nations there is much sincere talk and normally passionate action to fight against any form of discrimination,” said Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations. Yet, he said, “in practice many states, U.N. agencies and members of civil society tolerate gross violations of these commitments.”

The Holy See invited persons with Down syndrome, their families, advocates and research professionals to explore various challenges facing individuals with Down syndrome and cultural attitudes toward those with disabilities.

Mikayla Holmgren shared her own story. The 23-year-old woman from Minnesota made headlines last year as the first woman with Down syndrome to compete in a Miss USA pageant. “My parents were told that because of my Down syndrome diagnosis,” Ms. Holmgren explained, “I might never be able to walk or talk.” Yet “I found my passion for dance.”

An award-winning dancer, Ms. Holmgren said she sought to show “the world that people with Down syndrome have beauty that starts from the inside out.

“There are countries in the world that would like to get rid of people like me,” she said.

Kurt Kondrich, a retired police officer, spoke about the positive impact his daughter, Chloe, who has Down syndrome, has had on his life. He noted that the United States has laws to protect the eggs of bald eagles and sea turtles, but none to protect unborn children with Down syndrome. “I can’t think of any greater hate crime than identifying a population for termination because they



CNS photo / L'Observatore Romano

don't live up to our culture's standards of perfection,” Mr. Kondrich said.

He helped pass Chloe's Law, which requires health care providers to inform women who have received a prenatal Down syndrome diagnosis that they can receive support from the State of Pennsylvania. He is now advocating a law that would make abortion on the basis of a disability diagnosis illegal under protections against discrimination.

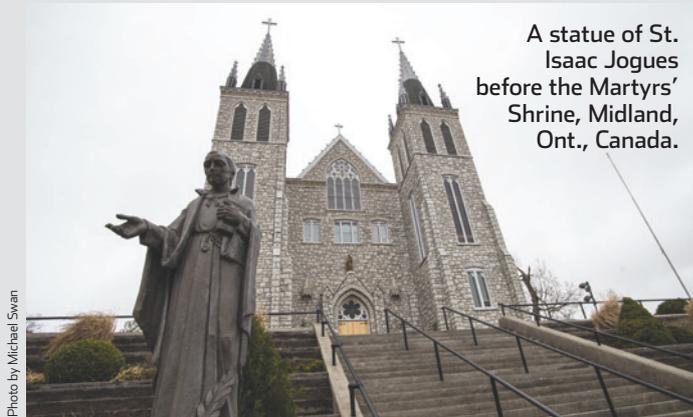
Deidre Pujols, vice president of the Pujols Family Foundation and the wife of the baseball player Albert Pujols, spoke about her advocacy on behalf of her daughter Bella, who has Down syndrome. “Maybe one day we will live in a world without disabilities. Wouldn't that be perfect for modern-day Hitlers?” Ms. Pujols asked. She compared the current practices in Iceland to Nazi eugenicist ideals.

Medical professionals at the meeting shed light on the current state of Down syndrome research. Mary O'Callaghan, a developmental psychologist at Notre



A young girl joins Pope Francis during an audience with Special Olympics athletes at the Vatican on Oct. 13, 2017.

A 'prophetic' merger of Canadian Jesuit provinces



A statue of St. Isaac Jogues before the Martyrs' Shrine, Midland, Ont., Canada.

Photo by Michael Swan

Canada's two Jesuit provinces—the English Canada Province and the Province of French Canada and Haiti—for decades have developed in parallel cultures that Canadians sometimes refer to as “two solitudes.” For the Jesuits that solitude will end on July 31, when the two provinces are merged.

“At the beginning of this process, we expected to find cultural differences [related to history and language], but we didn't, really,” said Peter Bisson, S.J., provincial superior of the English Canada Province. “The serious and interesting differences were really about religious culture.”

The importance of contemporary justice for indigenous communities has been a “rallying point” for Jesuits of both provinces and will continue, said Erik Oland, S.J., superior of the Province of French Canada and Haiti. “The French/English divide and the indigenous/non-indigenous divide really are profound wounds in Canada,” said Father Bisson.

Working through wounds is a risk, he acknowledged. “The scary thing about the truth setting you free is that it's going to make you miserable first,” he said. “But it's worth it for the freedom that comes—freedom with others—on the other side.”

Father Bisson said apologizing for participating in colonization and Canada's infamous residential schools for indigenous children was a risk because it could have led to lawsuits. Instead those acts of contrition have “opened [the Society] to new life.”

And negotiating French-English relationships means considering a history of discrimination and vulnerability, which means not only trying to notice cultural differences but taking the time to understand them, too. The merger “really is quite an adventure. It's prophetic,” Father Bisson said.

Dean Dettloff, Toronto correspondent. Twitter: @deandettloff.

Dame's Center for Ethics and Culture and the mother of a child with Down syndrome, highlighted studies that show a correlation between the use of prenatal genetic screening and high incidences of abortion. Nations like the United States are considering restrictions on the abortion of “pain-capable” fetuses. Dr. O'Callaghan said that exempting fetuses diagnosed with Down syndrome or other disabilities from such laws would represent discrimination.

Patricia White Flatley, co-founder of the LuMind Research Down Syndrome Foundation, reported that there has been renewed interest in the research community to improve the quality of life for people with Down syndrome. Dr. Flatley said that this is a “critical moment” because of numerous clinical trials testing ways to ameliorate cognitive challenges.

Angelo Jesus Canta, Joseph A. O'Hare fellow. Twitter: @ajxcanta.

ALONG THE WALL

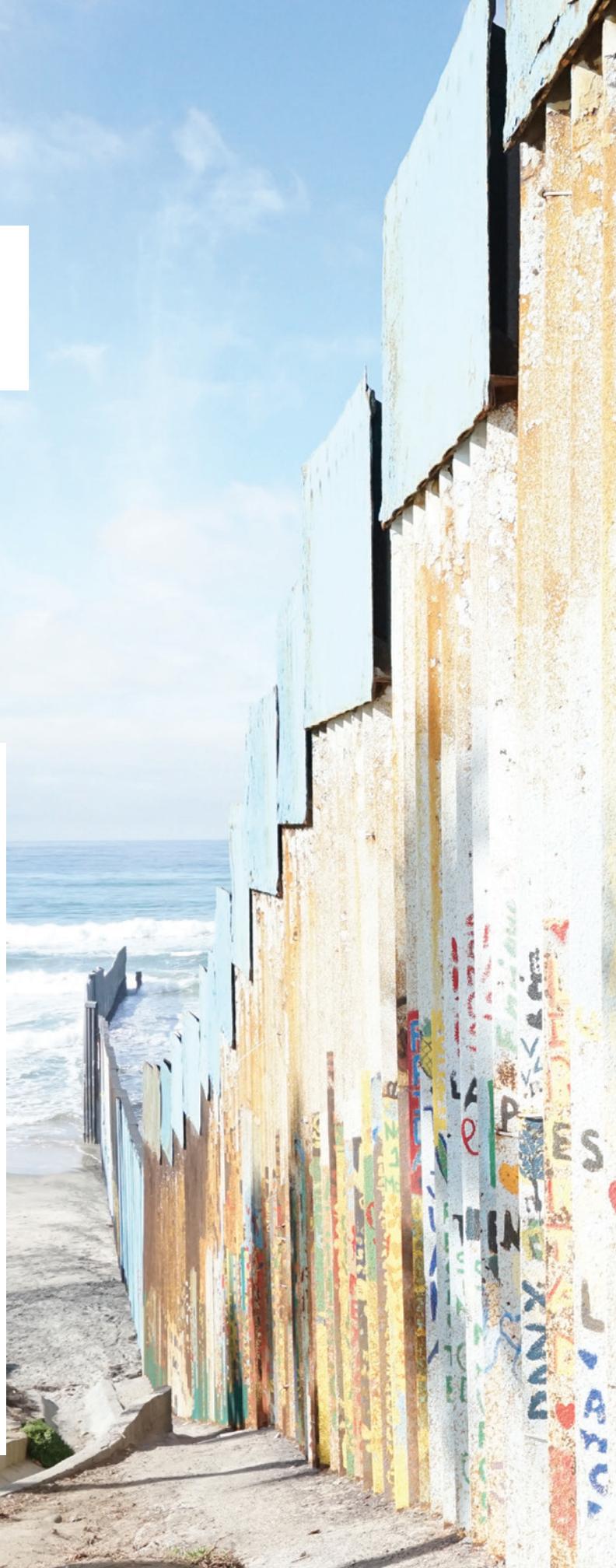
Life on the U.S.-Mexico border

By J.D. Long-García

It is a cool evening in San Ysidro, one of the southernmost neighborhoods of San Diego. Children are playing baseball at Larsen Field. From the bleachers, you can see past Las Americas Premium Outlets, across the international border and into the neighboring city of Tijuana, in Baja California.

Latino kids are handing out free samples of Wetzel's Pretzels at the outlet mall. Edgar, a bilingual Starbucks barista, takes another order. Parents push strollers with sleeping babies back to their minivans.

The cars are parked just a few feet from one of two parallel border fences. Not far past the first fence, under humming floodlights, a Border Patrol agent in his S.U.V. peers over the Tijuana River toward the second fence 150 feet south. This is "no man's land," where the Border Patrol uses trucks, helicopters and cameras to look for those who might cross without authorization. Just a few feet into Mexico, past the second fence, Tijuana residents drive on the Via Internacional freeway on their way home from work.





Residents of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, decorate the southern side of the barrier at the border with messages of peace and love on the Pacific coast.



J. D. Long-García

Prayers are offered before meals at Desayunador Padre Chava, a relief center for deportees in Tijuana.

President Trump continues to promise a “big, beautiful wall” along the U.S.-Mexico border. He talks ominously of drug cartels, terrorists and gangs taking advantage of a porous border. But there is a lot more to life in these border cities.

Juan Rodríguez lights a cigarette outside the Ross department store in San Ysidro. He is sitting on a concrete bench, waiting for his wife, who is exchanging a shirt they bought for their son. It did not fit.

“We’re celebrating 40 years as a married couple,” Mr. Rodríguez says. For the past 30 years, they have lived in Tijuana; but one of their sons, who graduated from a university in Mexico, married a U.S. citizen and now lives in California.

Mr. Rodríguez and his wife come to shop in San Ysidro often. He has a Senti card (Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection), which is granted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to travelers who are “low-risk.” It cost Mr. Rodríguez a little more than \$120 and a pre-screening interview, but he says it was worth it to avoid spending hours in line.

Things have changed a lot over the last 30 years, Mr. Rodríguez says, especially after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. “People used to just huddle up and then run across the border, down the freeway,” he says with a laugh.

“They would just disappear into the closest store or restaurant. But nothing would happen to them.”

Mr. Rodríguez and his wife will return home tonight. It’s a shorter line to get back to Tijuana than to cross into the United States.

“We live in peace,” he says. “There are problems in Tijuana, like any city. You know the neighborhoods. You just avoid them.”

Breakfast in Tijuana

Even at 7 a.m., thousands wait in line to cross into the United States at San Ysidro, the busiest point of entry in the world. It is also the site of many deportations.

The Desayunador Padre Chava, run by the Salesians, is one of the dozens of humanitarian centers serving those deported from the United States. The deportees can see the big yellow building with a white cross on top as they cross the small Chaparral Bridge into Mexico.

The center, which counts on dozens of volunteers, serves breakfast to about 1,000 people every morning. On Wednesdays, lawyers give free advice on the second floor. Among other services, there are hair stylists who can trim beards, though they are not always on time.

“What are you going to do? They’re volunteers,” says Claudia Portela, the coordinator of the center.

By the front door, next to the larger-than-life statue of the risen Christ, a volunteer leads groups of six to tables in the dining hall. The food is already waiting—except for the tortillas, which arrive last, to ensure they are still warm. Before the guests take their seats, they remove their hats, and another volunteer leads them in prayer.

“It used to be that they didn’t even say ‘Hi’ to you,” Ms. Portela says. Insisting on the short prayer before the meal changed things. “When they get here, they feel like failures. You can see it in their faces. Some made a tremendous sacrifice to get to the United States, but [now] they are deported and have nothing to show for it. Their world falls apart in that moment. The fall—it’s traumatic.”

That is when, she says, many turn to drugs.

“But we show them there is another way,” Ms. Portela says. The center offers spiritual support, counseling, internet access and job services. Many of their guests find jobs in fast-growing Tijuana, a city of 1.7 million.

“Some people aren’t ready to start working,” says Marcos López, who is busing tables at the center. “But we have to be patient and forgiving. Seventy times seven, right?”

Mr. López was deported from the United States in November. He is now living at the Salesian center with around 40 others. Though originally from Mexico City, he plans on staying in Tijuana to work.

“You can make a living in Mexico, too,” Mr. López says, adding that the center provides both moral and spiritual support.

Alex Balderama is another deportee who volunteers at the center in addition to using its services. Guests drop off their dirty dishes with him; one of them first pauses before a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, touches it and crosses himself.

“The simple act of serving others fills me with life,” Mr. Balderama says, explaining vaguely that he went through a “rough period” after being deported five years ago. “Just saying ‘God bless you’ as they drop off their plates. Talking with other volunteers, serving alongside them. That’s when things began to change for me.”

‘Over There’

Those who visit the beaches of Tijuana can see the Coronado Islands on the horizon. On a Thursday in January, dozens gather here, but no one is in the water. The beach, Playas de Tijuana, comes to an abrupt end at the U.S. border, marked by a 12-foot fence of thick metal shafts that juts into the Pacific Ocean.

Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, those living in the United States can come to see their relatives living in Tijuana through the fence at Friendship Park, nearly two miles from the nearest parking lot. The area is supervised by U.S. Border Patrol, and visitors must be prepared to show identification. Recently, Border Patrol announced a new policy that limits visits to 30 minutes and allows only 10 visitors in the area at a time.

On this weekday, the U.S. side of the park is closed. On the Tijuana side, a couple of teenage girls pose for selfies, their backs toward the fence. They laugh before walking toward a cluster of bright yellow and turquoise beach houses.

A barefoot young man makes his way toward them. Jesús Rodríguez is wearing a black hat, a ripped green shirt, camouflage pants and a white backpack. He has a beard, an earring and a tattoo on his right forearm.

He steps over seaweed and between large rocks, and past the two young girls. Mr. Rodríguez puts his two hands on the fence and peers through. He closes his eyes and puts his forehead on the cool metal.

“My wife and daughter are over there,” Mr. Rodríguez says. By “over there” he does not mean San Diego or even California. His family is in Vancouver, Wash.

“Two years and three months ago, I was deported,” he says. “I don’t have a record. They just picked me up for being illegal. I just want to be with my family.”

After being deported, he moved back to his home state of Michoacán in central Mexico, which is known as the stomping grounds of a major drug cartel. At first, his wife and 2-year-old daughter, who are both U.S. citizens, joined him. But the two moved back after the couple decided it was too dangerous.

“If I knew how to cross, how to leave here...” Mr. Rodríguez says, trailing off as he looks through the fence. “It’s better to die in the desert than to be here without seeing them.”

Through the Desert

From the Pacific Ocean, the border barrier continues east for 140 miles. There are few gaps. A fence divides the cities of Calexico and Mexicali, then cuts through sand dunes outside the California town of Felicity, near the Arizona border.

In the populated areas around San Diego, Nogales, Ariz., and El Paso, Tex., more fencing, cameras and Border Patrol officers have apparently deterred unauthorized crossings over the years. But migrants did not stop coming alto-

There are about 1,933 miles of border between the United States and Mexico. About 700 miles of that have some kind of fencing already.

gether. Instead, they changed their routes, often trekking across more treacherous land.

In Arizona, groups like the Desert Samaritans and No More Deaths journey into the desert to leave plastic jugs of water for migrants. In the twin cities of Nogales (one in Arizona, the other across the border in the Mexican state of Sonora), the California Province of the Society of Jesus operates the Kino Border Initiative. Thanks to six partner organizations, including the Jesuit Refugee Service, the initiative delivers humanitarian aid to the deported in Mexico, organizes presentations and workshops at parishes in the United States, and offers “immersion experiences” that include volunteer work and discussions with migrants in Nogales. It also advocates for a more just immigration system.

Breakfast is served at 9 a.m. at the Centro de Ayuda al Migrante Deportado (Aid Center for Migrants) on the Mexican side of Nogales. Samuel Lozano de los Santos, S.J., introduces the volunteers to the guests. Some of the volunteers are Mexican residents; others come from the United States.

“Who is here for the first time?” Father Lozano asks a group of about 40 migrants, including eight women. As a few lift their hands, the rest applaud. “We are not in agreement with [U.S.] anti-immigrant laws here. You will not face any prejudice when you’re with us. Here, you will be welcomed.”

The priest tells the new arrivals they will have a chance to make phone calls after breakfast. Volunteers from No More Deaths bring a number of cellphones for them to use.

“People will offer you their cellphones on the street, but don’t take them up on it. They’ll call your family 20 minutes later and tell them they kidnapped you,” Father Lozano says. “If they offer you work, tell them to come here first. You could end up disappearing.”

Sean Carroll, S.J., executive director of the Kino Border

Initiative, leads the group in prayer. While the guests sit in a few rows of picnic tables, volunteers bring them hot plates of scrambled eggs and chorizo, rice, beans and salsa. Steam rises from large plastic cups filled with coffee.

“There’s no work. I don’t have enough to provide for my children,” Matea Hernández Pérez says after breakfast. Recently deported from the United States, the single mother is from Oaxaca, which is nearly 1,600 miles from Nogales.

Father Carroll reports a significant decrease in the number of migrants at the center from 2016 to 2017. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported nearly a 24 percent drop in apprehensions of people trying to cross the border in 2017, which helps to explain the decrease in deportations.

The escalating border security has changed the lives of Nogales residents. “People have family on both sides,” Father Carroll says of Nogales. “Over the years, people would go back and forth. Even though you have a wall, they’re still family. But it’s harder now. The border is more militarized.”

In addition, he says, more migrants to the United States are telling him they were separated from their families in detention, and migrants are being detained for longer periods. While Border Patrol agents would not comment on the existence of a general policy, migrant advocates believe these measures are meant to deter border crossings.

The problem, Father Carroll says, is that emphasizing the wall leaves out any conversation about the root causes of migration. “The economic need that pushes migrants to leave their home countries is not being dealt with. The system needs to unite families and address violence.”

Most of the Central Americans who migrate to the United States are originally from the Northern Triangle—Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. The number of migrants from these countries to the United States rose by 25 percent from 2015 to 2017, according to the Pew Research Center. Over that time, the number of Mexican migrants decreased by 6 percent. Those coming from the Northern Triangle are fleeing gang violence in countries beset by drug trafficking.

“There’s no need for a wall,” says Lupita Flores, who cooks at the Aid Center for Migrants. “What we need is for our governments to talk to each other.”

An earlier incarnation of the wall went up in Nogales in the 1990s. It was made of steel previously used for landing strips in the Vietnam War.

But it is little more than “a speed bump,” says Bob Kee of the Tucson Samaritans. “There’s desperation, and



Jesús Rodríguez was deported from the United States more than two years ago; his wife and daughter remain in Vancouver, Wash.

J. D. Long-García

there's the power of love. If you combine those two things, it's really hard to stop someone from coming over."

After breakfast, Billie Greenwood begins to prepare for the next meal, separating freshly baked tortillas so they do not stick together. She and her husband come from Iowa to volunteer at the Kino Border Initiative from December to February every year.

By the sink, where volunteers wash dishes, a laminated Pope Francis tweet reads: "You will never have a better tomorrow if you are always thinking of yesterday. Remember, step past the past and face the future."

Ciudad Juárez

From Nogales, the fence continues east. After the fortified fence between Douglas, Ariz., and Agua Prieta, Sonora, most of the artificial barriers on New Mexico's 180 miles of international border will prevent only vehicles from crossing. This is a sparsely populated region of mountains and deserts; Albuquerque, New Mexico's largest city by far, is 260 miles north of Mexico.

The 1,200-mile international border with Texas is the longest of any state in the Southwest. There is relatively little fencing, as the Rio Grande has served to mark the border since the 1840 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

But as rivers erode terrain over time, the border moves.

Parts of the banks of the Rio Grande have been paved with concrete to keep the international border somewhat more fixed. The river, which begins in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado and cuts south through New Mexico, divides El Paso, Tex., from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. The river traces the southern edge of Texas until it empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

Ciudad Juárez was the last stop on Pope Francis' six-day visit to Mexico in early 2016. While he met with the Mexican president and members of the Catholic hierarchy, the visit focused on "the church on the peripheries." Still, the loudest message from the trip came aboard the plane back to Rome.

"A person who thinks only of building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, isn't Christian," the pope said when asked about then-candidate Donald J. Trump's proposal to extend the border fence. Walls stand in the way of encounters, he said, while bridges facilitate them.

In many ways, Tom Mosher, a Columban priest, has acted as a bridge throughout his priesthood. After serving in Chile for 29 years, the U.S.-born priest began serving at the Columban Mission Center in El Paso in 2011.

On Jan. 17 he joins a group of other faith leaders at Vista Ysleta United Methodist Church in El Paso. Father Mosh-



"I worry more about the wall that Trump is creating around people's hearts," says Father Pat Murphy at Casa del Migrante in Tijuana.

J. D. Long-García

er, who visits asylum seekers in detention, says he recently met eight women from six different countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo. He reports that Annunciation House, an El Paso refuge for the homeless and migrants, is overcrowded.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement has been detaining more migrants and even asylum seekers over the last year. "We were never happy with the Obama administration either," Father Mosher says. "But now it seems like they're using more force."

"There's no consistency," Pastor Deborah Clugy-Soto, of the United Church of Christ, chimes in. "At least under the Obama administration, there were rules."

As the meeting ends, the group decides who will host next month's gathering. Father Mosher offers the Columban Mission Center, and the group assents. (Everyone agrees Father Mosher makes delicious coffee.)

After a brief respite at his home, Father Mosher climbs into a rundown station wagon and drives across the bridge into Juárez. He is covering for one of his brother priests, Father Bill Norton, who celebrates a weekday Mass and leads a subsequent Scripture study at Corpus Christi in Anapra, a suburb of Juárez.

As he makes his way through the potholed streets, Father Mosher explains the impact of the North American

Free Trade Agreement. "It actually caused more poverty," he said of the 1994 agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico. He noted the impact on the pork and corn industries in particular. That contributed to the number of migrants moving north, where maquiladoras were springing up in cities like Juárez. These factories, run by foreign companies, tend to pay less than a living wage, according to Father Mosher. Workers at these plants assemble products with parts produced elsewhere.

Outside of Juárez, Father Mosher points to the border wall. "See that part there? It was just completed a couple of months ago." The fence had been reinforced through the 2006 Secure Fence Act, which President Bush signed after an 80-to-19 vote in the Senate. It funded nearly 700 miles of fence along the border.

Under President Clinton, the Border Patrol enacted Operation Hold the Line in 1993. This led to more Border Patrol agents being stationed between El Paso and Juárez to curb border crossings. A year later, the Border Patrol enacted Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego, which cut illegal crossings by 75 percent, according to the agency.

In Anapra, Father Mosher stops to give a few pesos to a man filling in potholes. People volunteer to do this work, he explains. The priest points out a supermarket near Corpus Christi Church, which has brought a variety

of produce to the neighborhood.

In the church, parishioners are sweeping the white tiles in the main sanctuary. There is a lot of dust outside, and it finds its way through the drafty crevices in the wall. Father Mosher, who towers above the parishioners, is greeted with hugs.

“The greatness of the Lord is made manifest through the little that we have,” he says in his homily. “God likes to reveal his power through those most in need.”

That evening, the temperature hovers around freezing. After Mass, a bundled-up group of nine gathers in the parish hall for Bible study. Salvador Méndez and Teodora Martínez are among them.

“We didn’t have work, so we came to Juárez on the advice of a friend,” Mr. Méndez says. He and his wife came from the southern Mexican state of Veracruz 14 years ago. “So, then we got here, and sure enough, we found work.”

The couple are parents to seven children and have been married 43 years. Mr. Méndez works at a maquiladora. About the building of a wall between the United States and Mexico, Ms. Martínez says flatly, “We wouldn’t like that.”

The couple has no intention of crossing into the United States, or returning to Veracruz for that matter. They simply do not like what the wall would say. It implies division.

The couple takes their seats in a circle of folding tables. Father Mosher continues where he left off on his last visit, unpacking parts of Scripture cited by Pope Francis in “The Joy of the Gospel.” The group takes turns reading passages from Genesis, Exodus and the Acts of the Apostles.

“The human being tends to satisfy itself by possessing many things. That’s a nearly universal experience,” Father Mosher says. “The liberation that Jesus offers us is spiritual, but he also offers a social liberation.”

Here outside Juárez, where Pope Francis chose to visit because it is on the periphery, Father Mosher challenges the faithful to go to the margins and accompany those in need. Everyone, including those who live on the periphery, is called to love their neighbors.

A Wall Around Our Hearts

All told, there are about 1,933 miles of border between the United States and Mexico. About 700 miles of that have some kind of fencing already. There are natural barriers, too, including mountainous terrain and 1,200 miles of the Rio Grande.

Back in Tijuana, Noé Lovato-Sánchez stands outside the Scalabrini-run Casa del Migrante. He is talking to José

Luis Flores. Both of these young men, not yet 30, are recent deportees from Los Angeles.

“You already have Border Patrol, and there’s already a barrier, what else does this man want?” Mr. Lovato-Sánchez says of Mr. Trump. Mr. Lovato-Sánchez’s wife and two girls are in Los Angeles. He says he is more concerned about anti-immigrant sentiment than he is about the wall. He spent the last seven months in detention before he agreed to be deported.

Mr. Lovato-Sánchez’s girls and wife are all U.S. citizens. They will petition for him to come back to the United States, but it will take at least seven years. He says he does not think he can wait that long, that there must be another way.

His friend, Mr. Flores, is planning to move back home to Puebla. “For me, the American Dream doesn’t exist,” he says. “It’s just a dream. God will decide what comes next for me.”

The men join dozens of others who dine at the Casa del Migrante that evening. In addition to a hot meal, cooked by volunteers from the community, the center offers clothing and medical services through the Red Cross, and it has a psychologist on staff. They try to give deported migrants the tools to start their lives over again.

“Trump’s first year was less traumatic than we expected—in terms of numbers,” Pat Murphy, a Scalabrini priest, says, referring to a decrease in deportations. In 2016 the center had 9,000 guests; in 2017, there were 7,000. More people are staying in Tijuana rather than seeing it simply as a transitional location.

“The wall is a physical barrier. It will deter some people,” Father Murphy says. “I worry more about the wall that Trump is creating around people’s hearts. It’s going to take a long time to get over this.”

Instead of investing in the wall, Father Murphy thinks the United States should invest in other countries. The founder of his order, Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, said people also have a right not to migrate.

“People don’t want to leave their homes. There’s corruption in Mexico, violence in Honduras. People are running away, trying to find a new life,” Father Murphy says. “Building a wall that’s higher and fatter, it’s not going to do anything to stop that.”

J.D. Long-García is a senior editor of *America*.

BEYOND MEASURE

Increasing enrollment of Latino students in Catholic schools could benefit both the schools and the students.

By Maria Luisa Torres



First graders Alondra Castañeda and Luis Magallón attend Queen of Peace Catholic School in Mesa, Ariz., where half of the students have their education fully funded.



J. D. Long-García

When Angela Ávila was a young girl in her native El Salvador, she did not grow up with riches or luxuries. Her home was modest, her upbringing typical of her humble Central American community.

But there is one special memory that still stands out for Ms. Ávila, today a wife, mother of two grown daughters and grandmother of four: “I had the opportunity to go to Catholic school. I’ve always known that I wanted that for my children and grandchildren. I never doubted that was the right path for them.”

That is why Ms. Ávila—with kind, smiling eyes, a gentle, soft-spoken manner and short, salt-and-pepper (mostly pepper) curls—is now seated at a small dinette table in the bustling, overflowing school kitchen of Immaculate Conception Elementary near downtown Los Angeles near the end of lunch in mid-January.

All four of her grandkids—from pre-K to seventh grade—are currently enrolled at Immaculate Conception. In exchange for reduced tuition, she volunteers the entire school day, Monday through Friday, helping out in the cafeteria and anywhere else across the school.

For Ms. Ávila, the importance of a Catholic education is beyond measure, in every possible regard, including “fewer students in each classroom, more attention from teachers and more emphasis on the overall well-being of each student.”

“For me, this school has been the ultimate, especially because my grandchildren have certain difficulties and special needs [including ADHD, a congenital heart defect, depression and high blood pressure]. The assistance I have received here has been,” she paused, briefly emotional, before continuing, “beyond my expectations. Everything they have done for these children—I don’t think any public school would have compared. I could never repay them for everything.”

During the interview, Ms. Ávila’s granddaughter Halley glided into the kitchen and immediately found her way into her grandmother’s embrace for a quick visit before returning to her first-grade class. While leaning back and snuggling against Ms. Ávila, the wide-eyed 7-year-old with golden brown hair shyly answered questions about her favorite school subject (science, especially learning why snow is white).



Unfortunately, Catholic education is not a reality for many Latino families across the United States, who often view it as something beyond reach. ●●

“I really like it here,” Halley quietly said of her school. Asked what makes her grandmother special, her shy smile widened, and she sat up a little straighter. “She helps me with my homework when I need it and she also plays with me.”

The situation Ms. Ávila and her family are in works well for them, allowing them to prioritize their values without breaking the bank. But Catholic education is not part of the lives of many Latino Catholic families across the United States, who, whether because of finances, misconceptions or geography, often view it as something beyond their reach.

Of the estimated 14.5 million school-age Catholic children in the United States, about eight million (or 55 percent) are Latino. The majority reside in the southern and western regions of the country.

Despite this significant—and still growing—number, only 4 percent of all school-age Latino Catholic children are enrolled in Catholic schools. Increasing enrollment of Latino students in Catholic schools could prove beneficial to both the schools and the students in ways that go far beyond the numbers.

U.S. Latinos and Catholic Education

The Latino population in the United States reached nearly 58 million in 2016 and has been the principal driver of U.S. demographic growth, accounting for half the nation’s population growth since 2000, according to the Pew Research Center.

In addition, U.S. Latinos are the youngest of the nation’s racial/ethnic groups. In fact, current trends show that by 2050 the child population in the United States will be about 32 percent Latino. According to 2016 data from kidsdata.org, in California, Latinos are already the largest

racial/ethnic group among children, accounting for 51 percent of all children under 18.

Despite this steady upward trend, overall Latino enrollment in Catholic schools across the United States has remained far behind shifting demographics, according to Hosffiman Ospino, associate professor of Hispanic ministry and religious education at Boston College. Seen in the context of the entire student population in Catholic schools across the country, the demographic breakdown appears somewhat rosier. According to a 2015-16 statistical report on schools, enrollment and staff by the National Catholic Educational Association, 20.7 percent of students in Catholic grade schools and high schools are members of racial minorities, and 16.8 percent are Latino.

But given the overall number of school-age Catholic Latino children in the United States, why do they remain underrepresented in Catholic schools? “If you crafted a list of 25 reasons...the answer would be all of the above—and more,” Mr. Ospino said. “One of the many reasons has to do with the sheer size of the population. There are eight million school-age Hispanic Catholic children in the United States. However, Catholic schools are only enrolling 1.9 million children [overall]. We simply do not have the capacity to educate all the Hispanic Catholic children in this country.... In a sense, we need to come to terms with that fact.”

Geographic factors play a significant role. Close to 70 percent of Catholic schools in the country are located in the Northeast and Midwest, but most of the Latino children are in the South and the West. The church needs to engage in a regional approach to better address this population, according to Mr. Ospino. “In regions and dioceses where fewer Latino families reside, parishes and schools need to make even more of a concerted effort to understand the barriers that keep families from seeking Catholic education,” he said.

Among newer immigrant Latino families, societal norms regarding Catholic education in their countries of origin often help shape long-lasting impressions. “When you look at the immigrant population in the U.S., particularly from Latin America...many see private schools as something only for the wealthy, because that’s [the way it was in their native countries],” Mr. Ospino explained. “So they come to this country, they see Catholic schools, and it just doesn’t click. They just don’t see that as an option for them.” But that may be starting to change.

Ariana López, a seventh grader, is among the 95 percent of students who are Latino at Queen of Peace Catholic School in Mesa, Ariz.



J. D. Long-García

‘We Pass the Faith Onto You’

The entire student body at Queen of Peace grammar school, around 240 students, made a circle around the Rev. Timothy Seavey after Mass in January. They gathered to pray the rosary together during Catholic Schools Week.

“We pass the faith onto you, and you in turn pass it on to the next generation,” Father Seavey said to the students. “How good it is to be able to share our faith at our school!”

For decades, Queen of Peace in Mesa, Ariz., has been a vibrant parish. There is standing-room only at all three Spanish-language Masses, and the congregation includes immigrants from countries like Mexico, El Salvador and Peru. After Mass, parishioners share tacos, empanadas and traditional Mexican sweet pastries on their way to the parking lot.

But in the past, the school struggled with enrollment. A big reason was affordability, according to Renée Baeza, the school’s principal. But recently the school has not only grown—it is financially stable. “We’re no longer in the red,” Ms. Baeza said, noting that many tuition dollars come through scholarships and school tuition organizations. These nonprofits allow residents of Arizona and 17 other states to redirect their tax dollars to help students attending private schools.

Ms. Baeza said families are required to apply for at least five needs-based scholarships when enrolling. That has led to half the students having their education fully funded. Another 28 percent have three-fourths of their tuition covered. More than 90 percent of the students receive some kind of assistance.

But increasing enrollment goes beyond the scholarships, Ms. Baeza said. “You have to build relationships,” she said. “If parents don’t believe you’re there for them, then you won’t be successful.” Parents play an integral role at the school, volunteering and coaching sports. The seventh and eighth grade boys won a diocesan Catholic Youth Athletics Association tournament recently.

Ms. Baeza tells her teachers, “[The students] have to see you smile.” During her talks with parents, she tells them how she felt on the first day she “got paid to go to Mass” as a Catholic school principal. “Some parents are sold on Catholic education because the sacraments are included,” she laughed. “They like not having to bring them somewhere else after school!”

About 95 percent of students at Queen of Peace are Latino and six out of 10 of their teachers are Latino and speak Spanish. Ms. Baeza said it helps when the faculty reflects the demographics of the student population.



Latino enrollment in Catholic schools across the U.S. has remained far behind shifting demographics.

Two eighth graders, Stacey Becerra and Alexa Cruz, stopped by their principal's office after the rosary. Both students switched from a local public school to Catholic education two years ago. "My mom thought it was better for me to learn about God and have a stronger faith," Stacey said. The sixth grader Anthony López and seventh grader Luis de la Cruz joined the girls moments later. Both of them also noted the importance of learning about the faith. All four students were born in the United States but have parents who were born in Mexico.

"What do you like most about Catholic Schools Week?" Ms. Baeza asked.

"The student-teacher volleyball game," Anthony said.

"You guys are going to lose again!" Ms. Baeza quipped.

The Cultural Component

The sort of community formed at Queen of Peace does not happen overnight. Catholic schools must make a deliberate effort to work to break down the many barriers that Latinos face when considering a Catholic education. One way to do that is for schools to be intentional about dispelling misconceptions about these barriers, said Sister John Mary Fleming, a Dominican sister who is the executive director for Catholic Education at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"Schools can do a better job providing information about tuition programs, scholarships, tax credits and a variety of other financial support systems" to Latino families, she said. According to the N.C.E.A., approximately 94 percent of elementary schools and 97 percent of secondary schools have some form of tuition assistance. But many families are unaware of this opportunity and consider Catholic schools unaffordable.

The Rev. Joseph V. Corpora, a Holy Cross priest who is the director of university-school partnerships in the Alliance for Catholic Education at the University of Notre Dame, said many people who come from Latin America

"grew up believing that Catholic schools were only for the uber-wealthy." Yet he notes that families are looking for more than just the most affordable option for their children's education.

"We can talk about many funding formulas that will make Catholic schools more attractive to Latinos. But if there's no relationships to start with, no investment in the community, they simply won't [seek Catholic education]," Father Corpora said.

According to Sister Dale McDonald, a Presentation sister who is director of public policy and educational research for the N.C.E.A., the underlying challenge is not only financial but cultural, and recommends "being more culturally welcoming" to Latino Catholic families in our parish communities.

Becoming more culturally sensitive is a win-win, because through the cultural exchange of "opinions, ideas, [different] ways of being in community, everybody grows," Sister McDonald said. But achieving this requires dedication across the school community, including teachers, principal, students and school families, she said.

Mr. Ospino, echoing Sister McDonald, said creating a more welcoming community "requires a major commitment to go into communities, into parishes, engaging people in conversation," he said.

"We need principals and teachers who understand that the church is a culturally diverse reality in this country," he said. "We need leaders who are passionate about this, who do not see diversity as a threat but as an opportunity. These people can be the pioneers who are thinking outside of the box...people who are creative in trying to figure out good business models for Catholic schools, people who are actively attracting Hispanic families to the Catholic schools and who are not afraid of the Spanish language, who are not afraid of the Hispanic culture, who are not caught up in some of the biases they have inherited."

Tools for Inclusiveness

For specific tools for everyday pioneers, Sister Fleming suggests reviewing "The Catholic School Principal's Guide," by the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education. The 20-page booklet offers 30 proven strategies to help boost Latino enrollment in Catholic schools. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops mailed copies of the booklet to all Catholic school superintendents across

Angela Ávila volunteers at Immaculate Conception School in Los Angeles, where her four grandchildren, including Halley, right, are enrolled. “I never doubted that [Catholic school] was the right path for them,” she said.



Maria Luisa Torres

the country last May. Suggestions include researching community demographics, cultivating relationships within a parish community, educating parish families, attending Spanish-language Masses and adapting classroom culture and management styles for a diverse community.

Especially for Catholic schools without Latino members in the administration, “pastors and principals need assistance in helping to invite and welcome [Latino] families into the schools,” said Sister Fleming. “[It’s about] developing an openness, building relationships. These are all very concrete actions schools can take to invite and make families aware of Catholic education.”

For a more in-depth approach, Notre Dame offers the Latino Enrollment Institute, a four-day course that coaches participants on different tactics for increasing Latino representation in Catholic schools. In addition, a follow-up coach—typically someone who has been successful increasing Latino enrollment at their own school—consults with participants for up to one year afterward.

According to Father Corpora, the success rate has been steady. Over the past six years, approximately 300 schools have participated, and the average enrollment increase of Latino students has been about 29 percent among them. Nationally, the overall increase has been 1 to 2 percent.

Success with ‘Madrinas’ and More

Unlike other areas of the world, the history of Catholic education in the United States “is kind of unique,” part missionary in nature, said Kevin Baxter, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

“We’ve always been in urban communities [welcoming] newly arrived immigrants,” he noted. “One-hundred some-odd years ago they were Irish, Italian, Polish, German; and now they’re Latino and Asian and African. I think that’s a really important piece about American Catholic schools that we always have to communicate to a broad audience, but especially to those newer immigrants.”

In the Los Angeles Archdiocese—which encompasses Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties—Catholic schools do not face the same shortage of Latino students, aided in large part by the local demographics. In fact, the average Latino child population across the three counties is about 60 percent.

The most recent local Catholic school census last fall reflects that. Across the 215 archdiocesan K-8 Catholic

schools, the student body was 54 percent Latino, 20 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and 4 percent African-American.

Nonetheless, the archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools does not take Latino or any other minority enrollment for granted, according to Mr. Baxter.

“Our numbers obviously reflect our archdiocese, they reflect our city...but we recognize that we can still do more,” he said. “We do outreach [to Latino and other minority populations], and we’re very proud of that.”

Mr. Baxter said they have participated in the Latino Enrollment Institute and embrace many of its strategies, including the *madrinas*, or “godmothers,” program, in which Latina women who already have children enrolled in Catholic school reach out to Latino families in the parish community and follow up with families who stop by the parish office or school to inquire about the Catholic school.

“The *madrina* can answer questions and help families through the process,” Father Corpora said. “Enrolling in Catholic school can be daunting—too much paperwork, too many questions, things aren’t in Spanish. The *madrina* helps, but what’s really happening is the *madrina* is establishing a relationship and trust.”



You have to build relationships. If parents don't believe you're there for them, then you won't be successful. ●●

According to Mr. Baxter, “Outreach has to be relational and personal. The *madrinas* program helps us do that in many of our schools.”

For María Esparza, a gregarious mother and grandmother—sporting pulled-up, onyx black hair, a straightforward manner and an easy smile with an infectious laugh—having been connected with a *madrina* many years back could have made a world of difference in her family, especially for her now-grown son, Omar.

“When he was a boy, I was interested in sending my son to a Catholic school in Montebello, but I spoke with a neighbor who told me, ‘Oh no, you can’t do that, because to attend Catholic school the students have to be perfectly fluent in English or they won’t accept them, and the parents, too,’” Ms. Esparza said recently, scoffing slightly at the memory, while sitting in the school kitchen where she works at Immaculate Conception. “And, unfortunately, I believed her.”

To make matters worse, that neighbor was not the only naysayer she encountered. Several people filled Ms. Esparza’s ears with similar misconceptions.

“Now I realize how gullible I was to...give up so easily,” she said. Looking back at her son’s public school years, Ms. Esparza said she believes a persistent lack of guidance and encouragement contributed to grave disinterest in his studies and did little to fuel any plans for his future. Eventually, he dropped out of high school.

“Today I tell people that I recommend Catholic school for everybody,” continued Ms. Esparza, “and I advise them to ignore any gossip and instead to ask questions—to ask people who know the real answers.”

Catholic Schools and the Future Church

Ethnic and racial diversity in Catholic schools creates a student body that reflects the multicultural church in the

United States—a church that continues to be increasingly Latino and Spanish-speaking, Mr. Ospino said.

“Do we want a strong church? Then let’s educate Hispanic children now and give them the best possible tools, so they can be the next generation...of teachers, theologians and college presidents,” he said. “Catholic schools give students the opportunity to imagine the world in a much better way, with the values of the Gospel. I want a piece of that for the next generation of Hispanic children, because, in many ways, the future of the Catholic Church is in their hands.”

Father Corpora concurred. “I never tire of telling families, ‘Catholic schools open the world to your children—and they keep the faith,’” he said. “Latino students who go to Catholic schools wind up being Catholic. And every single *abuela* [grandmother] I know laments the loss of the Catholic faith in one or more of her grandchildren.”

Ms. Esparza understands this feeling all too well. Although her now 37-year-old son Omar is doing fine today as an adult and parent—working hard at a warehouse to help support his family, including two sons enrolled at Bishop Mora Salesian High School—nurturing his own Catholic faith has never been a priority.

By contrast, the opposite is true for his much younger sister, Fatima. Ms. Esparza’s daughter, who is 17 years younger than her sibling, did have the opportunity to attend Catholic school. By the time her daughter was ready for kindergarten, Ms. Esparza had acquired the facts about Catholic education and, most important, she had finally learned to tune out the cynics.

“Going to Catholic school deeply ingrained her faith and love of God,” Ms. Esparza said. “Today my daughter never misses Mass. Her faith is an important part of her life, and it’s important to me, too. I’m just so grateful.”

María Luisa Torres is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles. J.D. Long-García contributed to this story.

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

A conversation on immigration, education and incarceration, with a special focus on how these topics effect Hispanic Catholics in the United States.



Kevin Appleby



Laura Garcia



Jill Kafka



Zach Presutti, S.J.

FEATURING:

Kevin Appleby, Senior Director of International Migration Policy, Center for Migration Studies

Laura Garcia, Racial Justice Program Manager for YWCA

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

WHEN: Tuesday, April 10, 2018
6:30 p.m.

WHERE: America Media
1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Fl.
New York NY 10036

RSVP: events@americamedia.org
(required)

This event is free and open to the public.

TO QUINCE OR NOT? NO EASY CHOICE

By Annette Jiménez

My daughter, now a 19-year-old fully settled into college life, will still throw out an offhand comment every once in a while about having been deprived of a quince.

“I’m still mad,” she said when I broached the subject with her recently.

Granted, I don’t think she has completely forgiven us for forcing her to share our attention with her younger brother either.





I saw less and less emphasis on the faith and heritage and more and more money being spent on extravagant parties. 🍷🍷

A quinceañera—or quince for short—is comparable to a bat mitzvah or debutante ball: a ceremonial recognition of a girl’s coming of age in the eyes of her community. In Hispanic families, a daughter’s 15th birthday symbolizes her special moment of reaching maturity.

Picture, if you will, a young lady wearing a brightly colored, sequined ball gown, donning a shimmering tiara and surrounded by a court of friends and escorts. Her parents and family beam with pride as the girl becomes a woman during this popular tradition for Latinos in the United States and throughout Latin America.

The quince has roots in the Catholic initiation ceremonies brought to Mesoamerica by the Spanish *conquistadores* as well as the elaborate rites of passage rituals celebrated by the region’s indigenous people. Faith is an important part of the quinceañera, and many celebrations begin with a Mass, or a prayer service if the family is not Catholic.

At a traditional quince Mass, the birthday girl is escorted down the aisle and receives special blessings. She gives honor to the Virgin Mary and pledges a commitment to purity. A celebration usually follows, with dinner and dancing. In some ceremonies, it is customary for the father to help his daughter change her shoes from flats to high heels as a symbol of her newly established maturity. Nowadays, the quince and her court commonly perform a dance routine.

Given the religious and cultural significance of the quinceañera, why did I chose not to celebrate one for my own daughter, Julia?

I had my reasons. For one, I felt that quinces had lost touch with those roots. I saw less and less emphasis on the faith and heritage and more and more money being spent on extravagant parties.

Teens and their families appeared to be competing with “My Super Sweet 16,” an MTV reality show on which parents spend thousands of dollars for what is in essence a fancy birthday party.

Given how important it was to my husband and me to

ensure our daughter could attend college without undertaking an overwhelming financial burden, those were dollars I had a hard time spending.

And, as it happened, around the time Julia was turning 15, we were saving money for a special summer vacation in Ireland, the country of my husband’s ancestors. We felt the education that our children would obtain traveling abroad and getting to know a different culture was invaluable.

We had to choose between the party and the trip. We chose the trip.

Although I still get the eyeroll—“Thanks a lot, Mom”—whenever the quince topic comes up, I think the memories we still cherish from our time in Ireland outweigh my daughter’s sarcasm. Julia and her brother dangled their legs hundreds of feet in the air at the Cliffs of Moher. We toured a Viking castle and kissed the Blarney Stone. Most important, we spent time as a family enjoying each other’s company—moments that every parent cherishes even more as our children get older and find their own way in life.

Despite my personal reservations, however, I have nothing but respect for families who choose to host quinces for their daughters. Promoting the faith, preserving our Latino culture, developing a positive self-identity, strengthening family ties—these are the elements of a quince that had me “this close” to hosting a simple celebration in 2013. But the truth is, quinces were not part of my family’s history. My parents hail from the poor hillsides—the land of *jibaros*—of Puerto Rico. When I was a teenager in the 1980s in central New York State, I remember only one family having enough money to celebrate a quince.

I recall the ceremony vividly. The young lady wore a white lace gown—no poofy, princess ball gowns back then—and looked to me like a bride. But the event’s cultural meaning was lost on me at the time, and I really never gave it a second thought until I had a daughter—a daughter who I hoped would know and treasure her Puerto Rican roots.

I remember talking to Julia’s teacher at a local Latino dance company called Borinquen Dance Theatre about my conflicted feelings. Had I made the wrong decision, choosing the trip over the quince? The teacher, one of the proudest Boricua one could ever hope to meet, chuckled, gave my arm a little tap, as she does, and said, “M’ija, I wish I could go to Ireland.”



▶ Annette Jiménez, far left, with her family—Julia, Harry and Aidan Gleason—at the Cliffs of Moher in 2013.

I realized then that heritage is not an either-or question. Through her eight years of dance with Borinquen, my daughter developed a strong sense of *orgullo* (pride) for her Latino roots, learning traditional folk dances from Puerto Rico alongside other Latinos.

My husband and I also provided her with a firm footing in the faith. Julia sang in the church choir and served as an altar server, lector and cantor at our Masses. Quinces often perform community service leading up to the ceremony; instead Julia volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and was a Girl Scout.

In our own way, my husband and I were able to instill in our daughter the values of service, faith, family and cultural pride that are commonly highlighted in a quinceañera.

My daughter may not agree with the ultimate decision, but perhaps one day she will appreciate the path we took. Perhaps it was that trip to Ireland that sparked her lasting interest in traveling to other countries and experiencing different cultures. She spent her summer between freshman and sophomore year working with children in Nicaragua and conducting research for her university. She serves on her university's support team for Puerto Rican students

who are completing their spring semester on the mainland while the island continues its recovery from Hurricane Maria. And she recently applied for a fellowship that could take her to Asia, Australia or South America this summer.

My husband and I could not be more proud of our daughter. We look forward to future celebrations for college and law school graduations—*si Dios quiere* (“God willing”), as my mother always says.

To quince or not to quince? The question reflects not only a personal choice but illustrates the beauty and the diversity of Latinos in our country and in our church. I did not need a quince to show off my girl to the world. She has made us proud with her own accomplishments. But that takes nothing away from the Latino parents who do continue to keep the tradition alive for future generations. We all share a common thread of love of family and a faithful commitment to being the best parents we can be for our children.

Annette Jiménez is a staff writer for *El Mensajero Católico* and *The Catholic Courier* in Rochester, N.Y., where she lives with her family.



Telenovelas: A Powerful (and Problematic) Part of Latino Culture

By Olga Segura



Images: USA Network, AP/Compositar: America

Telenovelas allow immigrants to feel connected to the countries and cultures they have left behind.

working class to rich. It was 1993, and my parents had arrived in the United States from the Dominican Republic two years earlier. They spoke no English, and telenovelas were the only television dramas they understood.

Like soap operas in the United States, telenovelas began on the radio, with 30-minute daytime segments geared toward housewives in Latin America. By the 1950s, the genre made the jump to prime-time television. Themes included murder, incest and adultery; and almost all were Cinderella stories, each featuring a female protagonist from a poor family who met and fell in love with a wealthy man. Some of the earliest telenovelas included Peru's "Simplemente María," about a single poor mother who becomes a seamstress and launches a successful fashion business; and Mexico's "Los Ricos También Lloran" ("Rich People Cry, Too"), the story of Mariana Villarreal, a homeless woman who moves to Mexico City and eventually falls in love with—and is in turn saved by—a wealthy man.

Shows like these served as the backdrop of my childhood. They included the Mexican-produced telenovelas "María Mercedes," "Esmeralda," "El Privilegio de Amar" and "Lazos de Amor." I watched these shows with my mother, aunts and uncles, none of whom knew much about "Sesame Street" or "Mister Rogers" but who knew and loved characters like María Hernández or the Soñadoras.

One of my favorite shows was

"Luz Clarita," which aired for six months in 1996 and 1997. Every night my mother, my sister and I would sit on our couch and follow the story of Luz, a Catholic orphan who, despite the obstacles she faces, stays strong in her faith and in her journey to find her birth mother. She is taken in by the de la Fuente family and becomes, as her name suggests, a symbol of "clear light" for them. My sister and I were such fans of the show that my mother would buy us Luz Clarita merchandise, from pens to a clear plastic bag printed with the iconic Luz Clarita pose: sitting in her Catholic school uniform, knees pulled up and head perched on her knees.

For immigrants like my parents, who arrived in the United States with nothing, telenovelas allowed them to feel connected to the countries and cultures they had left behind. They were stories that allowed us to escape and see, even if only on the screen, what economic mobility and success could look like for Latinos.

•••

Since the 1950s, telenovelas have become one of the most successful forms of entertainment in the world. Ilan Stavans, the editor of a book of essays called *Telenovelas* and son of the well-known telenovela actor Abraham Stavans, says that the genre has experienced significant changes since it was first created. He points out that there are now "all sorts of genres of telenovelas."

"There are telenovelas that make fun of telenovelas," he tells me, "there are novels written by

The first telenovela my parents watched was Telemundo's "Guadalupe." Its outlandish plot will be recognizable to anyone familiar with the soap opera genre. Guadalupe, the title character, is the illegitimate daughter of Ezequiel Zambrano and the unknown heir to the Zambrano fortune. Over 210 episodes, my parents watched as she discovered who her family was, fell in love and went from



With predominantly light-skinned female leads, telenovelas promote a Eurocentric idea of beauty.

prominent writers that are in the form of telenovelas, there are video games that use telenovelas.”

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the telenovela phenomenon also grew thanks to international syndication and broadcasting. Many of the series now air in far off countries like Poland, Russia and China. “Los Ricos También Lloran,” for example, is one of the most successful series to air in Russia. Eyder Peralta of National Public Radio described the popularity of telenovelas in East Africa on an episode of “All Things Considered” in 2017. “They’re imported from Latin America and dubbed into local languages,” he noted, and for many Africans, telenovelas feel authentic.

Telenovelas are also exerting more influence on American television. One of the most successful telenovelas of all-time is “Yo Soy Betty, la Fea,” which aired in Colombia from 1999 to 2001 and was adapted by ABC in 2006 as “Ugly Betty.” Betty, played by America Ferrera in the U.S. version, is a braces-wearing, unfashionable secretary who falls in love with

her boss, undergoes a makeover and saves the fashion magazine where she works. Another example is Telemundo’s “La Reina del Sur,” starring Kate del Castillo. Based on the novel by Arturo Pérez-Reverte, it is the story of Teresa Mendoza, a Mexican woman who becomes the most powerful drug trafficker in southern Spain. Since its premiere in 2011, the series has drawn in millions of viewers and has been adapted for English-language viewers by the USA Network as “Queen of the South.”

•••

For almost 20 years, my mother and I have watched telenovelas together. Since our “Luz Clarita” days, we have seen “Alguna Vez Tendremos Alas,” “Salud, Dinero y Amor,” “Tres Mujeres,” “Amigas y Rivaless,” “Salomé,” “Rubí” and many others. All the protagonists in these shows were light-skinned Latinos. It was not until 2015 that we saw black Latinos starring as protagonists in Telemundo’s “Celia,” which stars Jeimy Osorio as the Cuban singer Celia Cruz. The series, which also features the Afro-Latino

actors Aymeé Nuviola and Modesto Lacén, follows the singer’s journey as she becomes one of the most successful salsa singers of all time.

With predominantly light-skinned female leads, telenovelas promote a Eurocentric idea of beauty. In addition to a lack of diversity, they have been criticized for sexist characterizations. For most of the genre’s history, telenovelas have portrayed female protagonists as damsels in distress who require male saviors.

Marjua Estevez, an Afro-Latina editor at Billboard, said that while these shows were played in her home when she was growing up, she never fully embraced the genre because they did not speak to who she was. “They are traditionally anti-black/racist,” Ms. Estevez said in an email, “which erases a monumental proportion of what we call Latin America and ahistorically perpetuates the theory everyone looks/is the same around Spanish-speaking worlds.”

M. Tony Peralta, a first-generation Dominican artist and founder of the fashion company The Peralta Project,

Introductory Rites

By Michael Anthony Martínez

The first of a series of fourteen sonnets on the Catholic Mass

*The Lord be with you—And with your spirit.
On God, my whale, for sinful minnows fishing,
Through my most grievous wail, winnowed faults strip
Away the rust, reeling poetry's sheen.*

To celebrate the sacred mysteries
I nail the liturgy's words on my tongue.
Reclaim the pain of these metaphors
To birth in blood: *Kyrie, eleison.*

Too full of grace, she breaks Man's No—
With Yes. The Virgin crushes Eve's origin:
All sin erased. Fruit poisoned, now blessed, to
Replant seed in sacred ground for all kin.

*You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on earth.
You take away the sins of the world, receive our rebirth.*

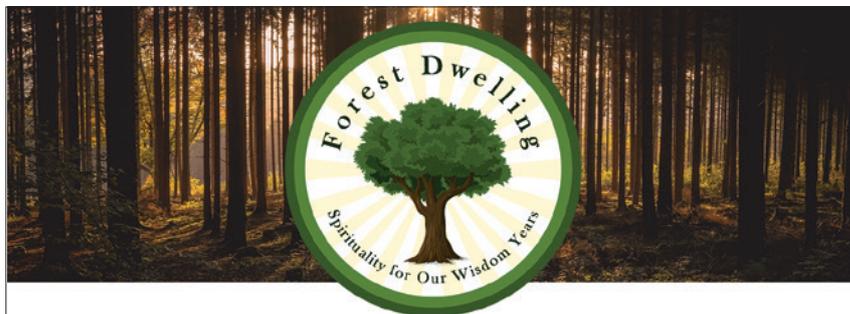
Michael Anthony Martínez, S.J. is a Jesuit scholastic at Loyola University Chicago completing degrees in social philosophy and digital media and storytelling.

adds that many view telenovelas as the only way Latinos can tell their stories. "I think that telenovelas have ruined storytelling in Latino communities," he said in an email, wondering, "Why aren't there any Latino sitcoms on Spanish television?"

Mr. Stavans argues that the problem lies with the creators of telenovelas. "These telenovelas in Latin America have been produced for the working class by the upper class," he says. "It's a vision that the upper class has of who should be in television." He adds, however, that Brazil is getting diversity right, noting that the telenovelas coming out of that country offer a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. These include "Xica da Silva," the story of a slave in colonial Brazil who rises to freedom and becomes rich and powerful.

It is perhaps no surprise that telenovelas often embody the anti-blackness and misogyny ingrained in Latin American society. Mr. Stavans, however, is hopeful that if the genre begins to change, then it can help to challenge the way women and black Latinos are viewed not just in Latin America, but in the rest of the world as well. "If there is a place in the Hispanic world where change can happen that can really have an impact on how people act, it is through telenovelas," he tells me. "So if telenovelas change, I think society changes. If telenovelas don't change, change in society is slower."

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



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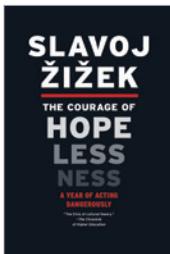
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Opposed to right-wing politics, Slavoj Žižek also attacks political liberals for being complicit in the way things are.

'The most dangerous philosopher in the West'

By José Dueño



The Courage of Hopelessness
A Year of Acting Dangerously
By Slavoj Žižek
Melville House.
320p \$18.99

Slavoj Žižek starts *The Courage of Hopelessness* with the premise that in today's globalized world, capitalism determines "all conditions of life." This "introduces a radical class division across the entire globe" that separates "those protected by the sphere from those outside its cover." In other words, he sees the inner world of capitalism as a sort of "cupola," where only a wealthy minority gets to profit. "The latest Paris terrorist attacks, as well as the flow of refugees," Žižek writes, "are momentary reminders of the violent world outside our cupola, a world which, for us insiders, appears mostly on TV reports about distant violent countries."

The author of over 40 books and the subject of numerous films, the 69-year-old Slovenian philosopher has been referred to as "the Elvis of cultural theory" for his use of philosophy to analyze popular culture. Though his

books range from studies on Hegel to film theory and even theology, Žižek most often focuses on the way ideology functions in political discourses and in popular culture.

He has also been referred to as "the most dangerous philosopher in the West," thanks in large part to provocative statements like "Gandhi was more violent than Hitler." Žižek, of course, does not mean exactly what he says there. Rather, "Gandhi's movement effectively endeavored to interrupt the basic functioning of the British colonial state." The violence he refers to is that which challenges the overall political structure of a society. Statements like these also offer a glimpse into Žižek's style: He attacks political liberals for being complicit in the way things are, while he is also opposed to right-wing politics.

Žižek attained celebrity status in the English-speaking academic world with the publication of *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989). When this book was published, ideology tended to be understood as an all-encompassing political narrative. The failures of communist regimes seemed to inaugurate a world where people would

be free from such projects. Yet at that time, Žižek argued that ideology would persist, though less as a matter of belief and more as the way people simply continued to act. Irony and cynicism, he argued, would become the dominant ideologies, enabling people to engage in a consumerist lifestyle while claiming to be fully aware of the problems it represents. Though people might claim not to commit to any specific system of ideas, their behavior would show otherwise.

In *The Courage of Hopelessness*, Žižek challenges the reader to act without relying on the false certainties of ready-made discourses. Global capitalism, he notes, is increasingly losing its link to Western democracy. Nondemocratic regimes like China's have proven that they can function within the world of global capitalism. This economic system is capable of adapting to various political systems, and in so doing it puts at stake what Žižek refers to as "the commons." This includes issues like ecology, immigration, access to information and health care. As common spaces of living and communication become more and more privatized, the question of who gets to have access to

them creates more worldwide tensions. Increases in migration and reactions against it, like calls to “build that wall,” are some examples of these tensions.

In the face of this hopeless situation, Zizek argues that we should avoid the temptation of identity politics. Since capitalism excels at appropriating all kinds of cultures and identities for consumerist gains, politicizing particular non-Western cultures and identities will not prevent its negative expansion. Though identity politics may mobilize many on the left, for Zizek this happens in full conformity with the way neoliberalism capitalizes on different cultures. Since capitalism cashes in on a certain free market of identities, identity politics does not, then, offer any serious challenge to the current state of affairs.

To develop these points, Zizek analyzes the Syriza movement in Greece, Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Trump-Clinton election in the United States. For him, Donald Trump is the “symptom” of Hillary Clinton’s politics, which focused on issues of cultural and sexual identity. She succeeded in uniting “Wall Street and Occupy Wall Street,” and in this sense her message to her liberal supporters was: “we can concede all your cultural demands... without endangering the global market economy.” These improvements in cultural and identity recognition are positive achievements in Zizek’s view, but he says they betray a fear that many political liberals have of actual change. Identity politics becomes a way of promising generalized change while allowing the neoliberal economic system to remain the same.

Zizek also argues that the excessive fear of Trump among liberals hinders

real engagement with him and his ideas. Political satires on television play on these feelings of shock and indignation to instill a false sense of solidarity. In short, they make Trump’s opponents feel smart and good about themselves. But this goes without committing to any collective action that goes beyond the demands for more recognition.

For Zizek, Trump is in a certain sense not all that dangerous. People like Ted Cruz are much more dangerous and extreme in their positions, because they are more fanatical in their ideology. Compared with them, Trump appears much more to be a cynic and an opportunist. Zizek sees Trump as “an attempt to keep together the two heterogeneous components of the Republican Party—big business and populism.”

For Zizek, Trump and Clinton are “both worse.” He argues that the political left cannot limit itself to fighting Trump. Rather, it should continue to align itself with people like Sen. Bernie Sanders, who dared to question the economic policies of Hillary Clinton. If all the left has to offer is a critique of Trump without a critique of Clinton, then Trump is just the beginning of more politicians like him to come.

Zizek also explores how multiculturalist liberalism is facing a crisis of conflicting values that it itself cannot resolve. Fundamentalist and terrorist groups make this deadlock more explicit when they see themselves as rebelling against the Western imposition of customs. Groups in the United States and Western Europe arguing against Western colonialism tend to be in favor of women’s rights. Yet groups like Boko Haram frame their opposition to wom-

en’s rights in anti-colonialist terms. For Zizek, “anti-colonialist critiques of the West more and more appear as a rejection of Western ‘sexual’ confusion, and as a demand for a return to the traditional sexual hierarchy.”

Should progressives, then, embrace the Enlightenment values of education and liberation from prejudices, at the risk of seeming Eurocentric? For Zizek, this type of questioning makes liberals feel conflicted about how open they can be. Again, they face a conflict of values for which they do not seem to have the answer. What Zizek rejects is the sort of attitude that ends up “silently tolerating ‘customs’ that humiliate women and gays, on behalf of the ‘greater’ anti-imperialist struggle.”

This book suffers from some of the common failings of Zizek’s other writings. He covers a wide variety of issues but does not always succeed in connecting them. Readers may also find it frustrating that Zizek has very little to offer in terms of concrete proposals. Yet he suggests that we first ask the right questions about our current situation and reject temptations to rash activism. He also suggests that we not shy away from looking at Western cultural values in new and different ways. “[O]ne tends to denounce Western cultural values at the very moment that, critically reinterpreted, many of them can serve as a weapon against capitalist globalization.”

Writ large, this book is an extended argument that a hopeless situation can be a fertile ground for acts of courage, provided one dares to think outside of the usual right-wing/left-wing labels.

José Dueño, S.J. *associate editor.*
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Reborn, again and again

“Yochanan is alive. God answered our prayers.’ Elazar looked at her, unsmiling. ‘Not prayers,’ he said. ‘Vows.’ Was there a difference?”

Rachel, the protagonist of Dara Horn’s beguiling new novel, *Eternal Life*, has a lot of time to learn the difference between a prayer and a vow. Born in first-century Jerusalem, by her late teens she is faced with the impending death of her young son, Yochanan, whom she had following an affair with Elazar, a young priest. Rachel seeks the help of the high priest of the Temple, who explains that to save the child Rachel must make the greatest sacrifice. In Horn’s handling, however, this does not mean Rachel’s death. Instead, in exchange for her son’s

continued life, Rachel has to vow to God that she will live on earth forever.

Out of this unexpected premise, Horn has written a story that spans continents, centuries and generations. Rachel repeatedly reaches the end of her days through scenarios ranging from the heroic to the harrowing to the banal, only to be reborn each time at 18. Her former lover Elazar, we learn, also made an eternal vow to save their son. Trailing after her through life after life, he is at once a comforting presence and an enraging reminder of Rachel’s predicament, and is himself consumed with one question for her: “Why do you keep marrying everyone but me?”

The richness and drama of Rachel’s lives offer an ample answer. Among these, the most memorable are the earli-

est, when, as the strong-willed daughter of a prominent scribe in Jerusalem, she perceives intensely that “the world was full of the weight of God’s presence,” and the latest, when she jokes with her contemporary American grandchildren about being very old, jokes that range in ironic effect from gentle to devastating.

Even if she might be forgiven for thinking otherwise after 2,000 years, by the end of *Eternal Life*, when reflecting on the past and future lives of her hundreds of children, Rachel insists, “It was worth it, it was worth it, all of it was worth it.”

Randy Boyagoda is a professor of English at the University of Toronto, where he is also principal of St. Michael’s College. His new novel, Original Prin, will be published in 2019.

With God in silence

The goal of centering prayer, a form of silent meditation, is to quiet the mind and body. The meditator focuses on a word, like “Jesus.” Each time the mind wanders, the meditator silently repeats the word. “Thoughts get fewer,” notes Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O., in *World Without End*, “and you may even experience moments of no movement of mind or body at all.”

Father Keating is a monk of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, commonly known as the Trappists, as well as an acclaimed author and the co-founder of the Centering Prayer movement. This compelling new book consists of Keating’s responses to questions posed by Lucette Verboven, a Flemish film producer and writer.

As a boy, Keating would sneak out of his family’s apartment in New York

City to attend Mass. While a student at Yale and Fordham University, he was drawn to the wisdom of the Christian mystics, eventually leading him to the Trappists. He later served as abbot of St. Joseph’s Monastery in Spencer, Mass., for two decades. Now 95, he lives in retirement at St. Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass, Colo.

World Without End showcases Keating’s wisdom and his lifelong passion for connecting with God in silence. Verboven digs deep by posing questions about Keating’s beliefs. Asked if he ever experienced doubt, Keating says, “Sure, but you can get over that. You have to decide to trust God.”

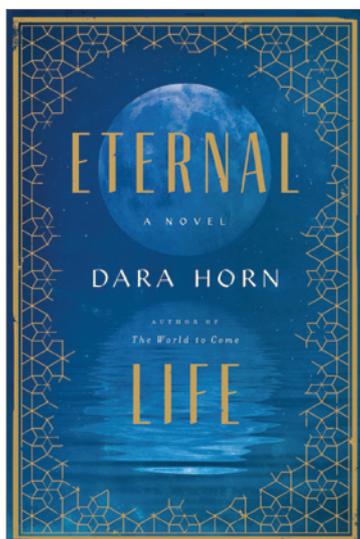
“We are invited,” Keating says, “to let go of our idea of God, of the spiritual journey, even of Jesus Christ, and to let God be whoever He is.”

The book also includes a separate question and answer session with Fa-

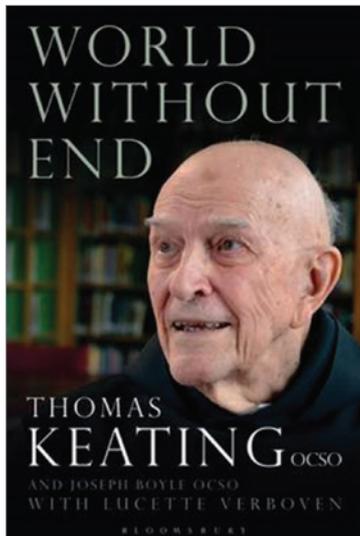
ther Joseph Boyle, the current abbot of St. Benedict’s Monastery. Boyle expresses similar thoughts about meditation, but the focus is clearly on Keating, who has written more than 30 books on the subject.

World Without End captures Keating’s humility, openness and depth. Atheists, agnostics and spiritual seekers would do well to read this inspiring book. Keating is not trying to convert anyone. He simply wants to introduce readers to the mystery of something beyond the physical world. That something is often called “God.”

Bill Williams is a freelance writer in West Hartford, Conn., and a former editorial writer for The Hartford Courant. He is a member of the National Book Critics Circle.



Eternal Life
A Novel
By Dara Horn
W. W. Norton. 256p \$25.95



World Without End
By Thomas Keating
Bloomsbury Continuum. 176p \$15

Never enough

The paradox of being from two places but having no real home is a phenomenon all immigrants grapple with. Jorge Ramos is no stranger to that experience, as is evident in his new memoir, *Stranger: The Challenge of a Latino Immigrant in the Trump Era*.

The book opens with the infamous encounter in August 2015 between Ramos, star anchor of Univision's "Noticiero Univision," and then-presidential candidate Donald J. Trump. When Ramos pressed for specifics on Trump's campaign promise to deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants, Ramos was removed from the press conference. Outside, Ramos was mockingly told by a Trump supporter to "get out of my country."

This encounter prompted Ramos to examine what the Trump supporter meant. As a U.S. citizen, Ramos has the same right as any other American to live here. As a member of the media, Ramos has the right to attend press conferences and ask tough questions. Yet clearly some still would not accept an immigrant like him. He remained a stranger in his own country.

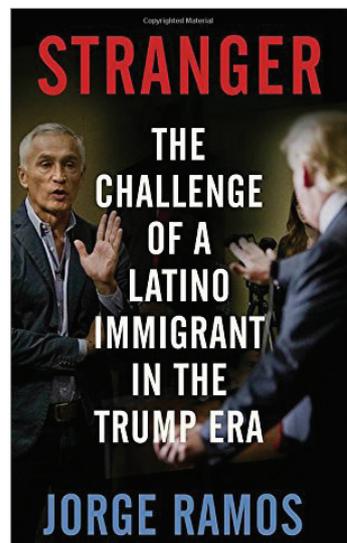
Born in Mexico City, Ramos immigrated to the United States in 1983 at the age of 24 with dreams of working in television. His experiences mirror those familiar to many immigrants: arriving in Los Angeles with little money and few possessions, struggling to master the English language (with an accent he still has not been able to shake) and desiring to work and live freely.

While the memoir is inevitably full of snapshots of Ramos's life as a bilingual journalist, from his inexperienced

days in radio to his prestigious current status as the "Walter Cronkite of Latin America," what is most striking is how he comes to terms with his yearnings for the comforts of his home in Mexico. Ramos writes, "I will never be American enough for many Americans. Just as I will never be Mexican enough for many Mexicans."

These words eerily resemble a famous line from the 1997 biopic *Selena*, in which Abraham Quintanilla says about Mexican-Americans, "We gotta be more Mexican than the Mexicans and more American than the Americans, both at the same time." If 21 years later, Mexican-Americans are still dealing with the same issues, who is to say when we will truly belong?

Vivian Cabrera, editorial assistant.
Twitter: @iCabrera05.



Stranger
The Challenge of a Latino Immigrant in the Trump Era
By Jorge Ramos
Vintage. 224p \$15

A Chicano activist reclaimed from history's margins

By Antonio De Loera-Brust

If Oscar Zeta Acosta is remembered at all, it is not as a fighter for Chicano civil rights. It is not even as a Chicano. Acosta has gone down in history as Dr. Gonzo, Hunter S. Thompson's companion in the book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Thompson describes Dr. Gonzo as Samoan, and the character comes across as an even more irresponsible, hedonistic buffoon than Thompson himself. But the real Acosta was more than just another 1960s druggie. He was a Baptist missionary, a peach-picker, a lawyer, an activist and a visionary. Above all, he was the Brown Buffalo, the name he chose for himself because, as he put it, the buffalo is "the animal everyone is out to get."

Now, almost 50 years after Acosta's 1974 disappearance in Mexico, a new documentary aims to reintroduce him in the context of the Chicano movement. "The Rise and Fall of Brown Buffalo," directed by Phillip Rodriguez, presents a complex portrait of Acosta as a man rife with contradictions. He was fearless, angered

by injustice and constantly wrestling with his own demons. His childhood was traumatic; he was subject to abuse at home and racial humiliation at school. In his youth, Acosta tried to assimilate. But ultimately it was connection to his own people that he sought.

The documentary provides a valuable snapshot of the United States' largest minority group in an era of revolt, showing how Mexican-American youth organized and demonstrated from Denver to Los Angeles. They demanded better schools, equal treatment in the criminal justice system, fair labor conditions for farmworkers and to learn their own history in the classroom. Above all, they reimagined themselves not as undeserving foreigners but as natives in a stolen land—proudly Chicano, a once derogatory term now reclaimed as their own.

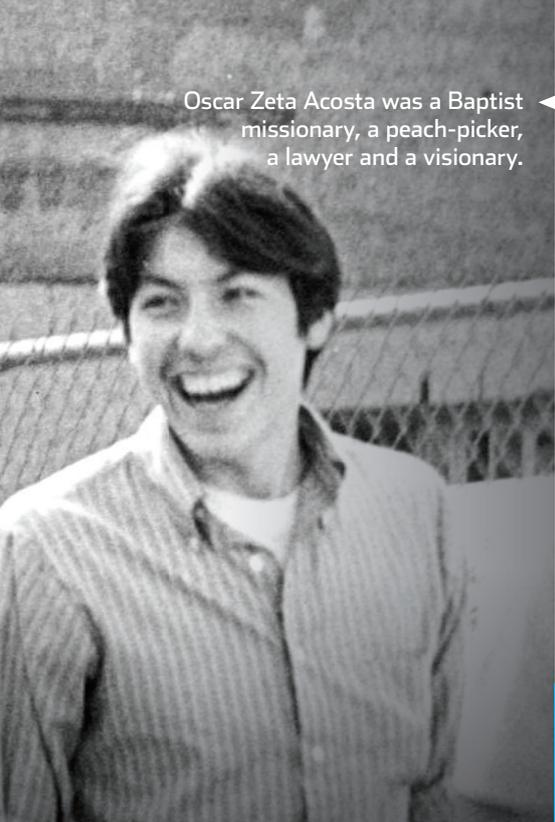
Presented as a dramatization, the unconventional documentary uses actors to portray real-life characters. An actor playing Acosta narrates the film, and scenes from his life are

staged as if in a play. Notable are the cameos made by prominent Latino politicians, which remind us of how far the Chicano community has come. Among the actors is Antonio Villaraigosa, the former mayor of Los Angeles who is now running for governor.

Such a political feat would have been inconceivable in Acosta's time and represents the progress that Acosta, for all his flaws, helped advance. Despite his inexperience, he served as the main trial lawyer for the East LA 13, the young organizers of the historic 1968 Chicano high school walkouts. He was also present at the Chicano Moratorium, one of the largest antiwar demonstrations in the country. And he wrote two autobiographical novels, chronicling his involvement in the cause and the heady days of the Chicano movement.

"So what is it? Am I ashamed of my race? Who has brought me to this detestable place?" Acosta wrote in *Revolt of the Cockroach People*. The documentary answers his questions,

Oscar Zeta Acosta was a Baptist missionary, a peach-picker, a lawyer and a visionary.



pointing to his upbringing at a time when Chicanos could not use the swimming pool or ask a white girl out on a date. Though much has improved since Acosta's time, hatred of Mexicans remains endemic in our society. To be Mexican-American today is to watch your country build a wall against your kin.

Compared with the giants of the civil rights era, Acosta did not accomplish much. His run for L.A. County sheriff in 1970 was certainly more about making a point than achieving lasting change. But by imagining the impossible, Acosta foresaw changes still to come. He should be remembered not as Dr. Gonzo, part of the counterculture the real Acosta ultimately denounced as "white acid," but as the Brown Buffalo, a voice for the Chicano people, who are only now beginning to claim our proper place in this country.

Antonio De Loera-Brust, *Joseph A. O'Hare fellow.*

Blurred truths on the border

In his photography, David Taylor shies away from stereotypes. He has spent the last 11 years making photographs on the U.S.-Mexico border, capturing the complexities of a land that is constantly oversimplified.

"There's a tendency to present the border as a monolithic experience," he says. "The host of mental images people conjure connote a binary relationship between the two countries. Here, there; us, them; north, south; good, bad. Right?"

Mr. Taylor has photographed the U.S. border patrol, smugglers and 258 monuments erected to mark the 1854 U.S.-Mexico border after the Gadsden Purchase, which established the present international boundary between the two nations. The *New York Times* described the latter series ("Monuments") as "a catalog that is so simple, yet so tied with ideas of national identity, conquest and desperation."

In his current project, Mr. Taylor focuses on Tijuana. One of the images is of an area of Hacienda Agua Caliente, a well-to-do part of the border city. Vacant land runs into haciendas and pedestrians have worn paths through the grass. Other

images show paths between large homes, homes partially collapsed by floods and a soccer field next to a warehouse. Mr. Taylor describes this work as pulling apart "the metamorphosis of the city," which he says reveals "collisions between classes."

"In some ways, the banal details of some of these images push back against that really ugly, repugnant narrative of [Mexicans as] rapists and drug dealers," he says.

The *New Yorker* described his collection "Working the Line" as a "balance between extremes." For the project, Mr. Taylor spent time embedded with Border Patrol agents. One night, Border Patrol stopped three smugglers carrying bundles of marijuana. He finds it problematic to make photographs of people who are in powerless situations, but he asked the three men for permission. The image is a 30-second exposure made by the light of a full moon. The three men, who said they were from Mazatlán, had to sit very still for the duration of the exposure. But even then, the image was blurred.

J.D. Long-García, *senior editor.*
Twitter: @JDLONGGarcia.



Three smugglers photographed in a 30-second exposure made by the light of the moon.

Photo courtesy of David Taylor

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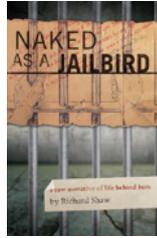
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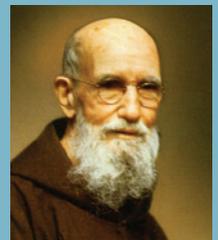
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United to the Father

Readings: Acts 4:8-12, Ps 118, 1 Jn 3:1-2, Jn 10:11-18

In John's Gospel, Jesus extends to his disciples the same relationship he has with the Father. Just as Jesus and his Father were one, so Jesus and his disciples are one. Unity at the deepest level was the result of the resurrection.

It was not controversial among the first Christians to claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. Opinions varied only when the discussion turned to the resurrection's significance. In today's Gospel reading, John the Evangelist shares his understanding of the resurrection. By taking up his life again, Jesus demonstrates his oneness with the Father. Nothing can be taken away from those who share the Father's love.

John makes this claim vigorously throughout his Gospel. Because of the Father's love, Jesus loses nothing. In spite of his ignominious death, his followers only grow in number, his mission only expands and his life grows ever stronger as more and more people receive a share of his Spirit. In John's mind, the resurrection vindicates Jesus' claim to speak with the Father's voice and act with the Father's power. Death had no dominion over him.

John also understands the death and resurrection as the process by which Jesus drew others into the love he shared with the Father. At the start of his ministry, Jesus alone knew the Father (Jn 1:18). By its end, a growing community of disciples was coming to share the same love. Jesus ensured their continuing growth in divine intimacy by handing over his Spirit on the cross (Jn 19:30) and then giving it to each disciple after the resurrection (Jn 20:22). The same indwelling power that directed and energized his ministry now drew the disciples onward in their service of Christ's mission. The resurrection was a necessary step; Jesus received back his Spirit in such a way that he could confer it on others.

Jesus delivers the reflection in today's Gospel reading in part as a response to the Pharisees (Jn 9:13), who had just thrown out the blind man. Here was a man newly healed, filled with gratitude and ready to serve the God of Israel. All the Pharisees could think to do was drive him away. Jesus compares them to hired men who see in the flock only

'This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.' (Jn 10:17)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How has Jesus invited you into the love he shares with the Father?

What aspect of Jesus' mission has the Father shared with you?

What grace have you received to fulfill that mission?

a source of income. By contrast, Jesus was the good shepherd, who knew each sheep by name. Jesus knew the disciples the way the Father knew him. Through love, the Father taught Jesus every dream he had for creation; through their unity, Jesus found the power to bring the Father's vision to life. Just so, Jesus teaches his disciples everything the Father taught him, and in his Spirit we have what we need to bring that dream to life.

Like Jesus, we are people from whom nothing can be taken away. If we stay busy about Christ's mission, no matter what trials we face, our Good Shepherd will restore us and bring us home again. Like Jesus, we offer our lives to the Father only to receive them back again, restored and filled with divine energy.

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

Larry Kudlow & Chris Matthews: Civility in America



A conversation on the polarization of American society, the importance of a free press, and the power of the media to build both walls and bridges between communities

FEATURING: **Larry Kudlow**, Director, National Economic Council; Contributor, CNBC
Chris Matthews, Host, *Hardball with Chris Matthews* on MSNBC

MODERATOR: **Matt Malone, S.J.**, editor in chief of *America* magazine

WHEN: Wednesday, May 2, 2018 | 7 p.m.

WHERE: Sheen Center for Thought & Culture
18 Bleecker St.,
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TICKETS: sheencenter.org/shows/media
(required)

Remain in Me

Readings: Acts 9:26-31, Ps 22, 1 Jn 3:18-24, Jn 15:1-8

In last week's Gospel reading, Jesus emphasized the unity he and his disciples share, using the image of the good shepherd. This week he speaks of the same unity with the symbol of a vine and its branches.

The care of grapevines is one of the oldest horticultural practices in Western civilization. Clear archaeological evidence for winemaking comes from Armenia about 4100 B.C. The artifacts found there indicate that practices have not changed much in 6,000 years. As Jesus watched the vinedressers of his day, he saw practices like those one might find today in any of the world's great wine regions.

One of the most important of these practices is the pruning of vines. Anyone examining a grapevine will notice two types of stem. One is the brown, woody vine that runs from the taproot upward and along the trellis. If tended properly, these vines can grow quite long and live for over a century. The second kind are the green, herbaceous stalks

that shoot out from the vine. They usually last only one or two seasons before they die off. These delicate stalks bear leaves and often produce fruit. Some do not, however, because of poor sunlight or partially blocked joints. An overabundance of these non-fruiting stalks saps the plant of energy and reduces the size, abundance and quality of the grapes. Vinedressers prune off these non-fruiting stalks to direct the plant's energy into those branches that will produce both leaves and fruit.

This is the symbol Jesus develops in this week's Gospel reading. Jesus is the perennial vine from which the green shoots spring. Some do not form a strong connection with him. Like the fruitless stalks of a grapevine, they draw energy but produce no fruit. Others remain firmly attached to him and produce much fruit. The Father prunes away the former in hopes of giving life more abundantly to the latter.

A disciple's decision to remain in Christ marks the difference between those who bear fruit and those who are pruned away. As John speaks of it here, remaining in Christ is an active concept. It is not enough to draw life and energy from one's faith; a disciple must also bear fruit. The first and second readings today give some examples of this fruit. Saul spoke openly of his faith in Jesus Christ and inspired others to follow him. Early Christians lived in peace, sharing all they possessed. John reminds Christians of their commitment to love one another and so remain in Christ. In each example, disciples had to take the life they drew from Christ and use it to do something novel, something challenging, something life-giving to others. They were the green shoots that produced much fruit.

Disciples today must remember the same lesson. Although our techniques to remain in Christ and produce fruit might not look anything like those in the New Testament, they must be just as vigorous. Those of us who draw life from the Spirit of the risen Christ must use that power to give new life to others.

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

'If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.'
(Jn 15:7)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How strong is your connection to the vine?

How much energy do you draw from God?

How much of that energy do you use to give life to others?

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Minding the Gaps While Reporting on Latinos

By Juleyka Lantigua-Williams



While Latinos make up just 18 percent of the U.S. population, we make up 33 percent of the prison population. Latino men born in 2001 have a 1-in-6 chance of ending up in prison, compared to a 1-in-17 chance for non-Latino white men. Latinas have a 2.2 percent chance of doing the same, while a white woman's chance is only 0.9 percent. Why are so many Latinos of various backgrounds affected by law enforcement?

There are over 12 million admissions to jails across the country every year. A sizable portion of that number are repeat offenders, who may go through a jail's revolving door five or six times in a single year. For minor offenses, people can usually post bail and go home. But scores of Latinos, whose median household income is the second-lowest among the four major racial groups, cannot afford bail, and they sit in jail, awaiting trial, often for months. In the meantime, they lose jobs, get behind on rent, sometimes forfeit custody of their children and even jeopardize their immigration status.

Megan Stevenson, an economist and professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, studied how bail fees affect Philadelphia residents. She concluded that “those who can't afford bail are 13 percent more likely to be convicted and will receive incarceration sentences that are on average five months longer.”

Beyond the financial burden of bail,

sitting in jail also worsens the odds at trial time. “We've already known that people that are detained are more likely to be found guilty, and are more likely to have unfavorable case outcomes,” Ms. Stevenson told me.

For Latinos who are not citizens, the story gets more complicated thanks to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which increasingly uses local jails to hold undocumented immigrants while it prepares to deport them. Today, jails are filling up with South and Central Americans by the truckloads. Since 2016, ICE has set a goal to detain on average 40,000 people daily. Most of them are Latinos, and most will not have legal recourse as their deportation nears.

As a reporter on the criminal justice beat, I often found myself torn because of the incomplete reporting on Latinos in the system. For one thing, the data available is not detailed enough for any meaningful analysis of how country of origin, citizenship status and geographic location within the United States affect criminality, sentencing and recidivism.

There are also no significant sociological studies on how certain cultural norms prevent or contribute to Latinos' ending up in the criminal justice system. For example, the Latino extended family exerts tremendous pressure on young people to stay in school and follow a traditional path to steady employment. Family pressure is often

a force for good in keeping juvenile offenses low. On the other hand, the *machismo* that defines much of Latino culture plays a role in two ills that plague many immigrant communities: domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

Understanding such dueling phenomena in our cultures makes reporting on Latinos a moral and intellectual challenge. The more I tried to learn, the more complicated telling a full story became. One way to address this chasm is for more Latinos to run the studies, collect the data and conduct interviews—especially in Spanish when appropriate, as so much is lost in translation. I also think the traditional self-reporting methodologies do not work as well because Latinos are socialized to be hypersensitive to what others think and go to great lengths to maintain the image of propriety—even to the extent of harming ourselves.

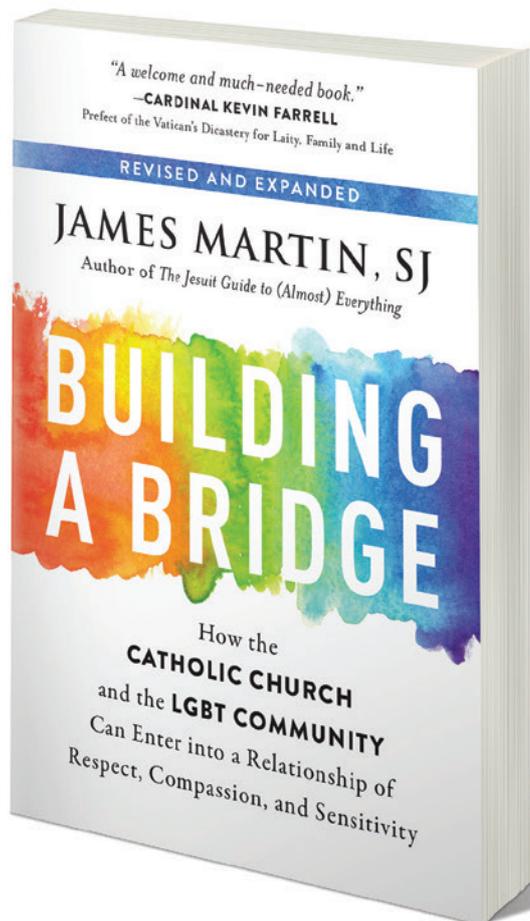
After almost two decades as a journalist, I still often struggle when I cover Latinos. My journalistic commitment to the facts has to be balanced with fuller depictions of many cultures that are constantly changing but are poorly documented by traditional methods.

Juleyka Lantigua-Williams is the founder and chief executive officer of Lantigua Williams & Co., an audio and film production company based in the Washington, D.C., area. Previously she was a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, covering criminal justice; Twitter: @JuleykaLantigua.

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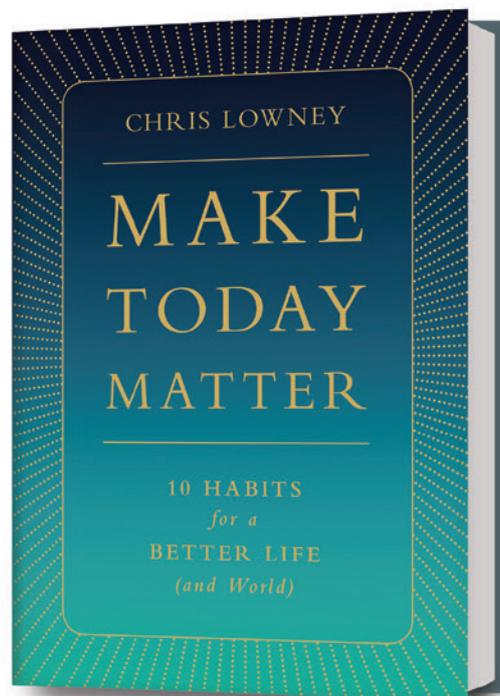
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