

America

APRIL 1, 2019

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

Inside the Election of Pope Francis

An exclusive report

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Jesus loves me,
this I know.

A First Draft of History

Phil Graham, the late publisher of *The Washington Post*, is often credited with popularizing the notion that newspapers are “the first rough draft of history.” That was certainly true in Mr. Graham’s day, the mid-20th century, a time when newspapers so dominated the national discourse that *New Yorkers* saw fit to name two of our most famous squares for *The New York Times* and *The New York Herald-Tribune*. Today, of course, newspapers are a dying breed; and the first rough draft of history is recorded in digital characters and so-called hot takes on social media.

Magazines like **America** are not really the first draft of anything. Reviews like ours exist to provide a digest or analysis of events, often from a definite ideological or philosophical perspective. By definition, then, most of our content is several steps removed from the news cycle. Still, from time to time, when the publishing planets align, we break news as well as analyze it. This issue of **America** is a good example. In these pages, we publish an exclusive excerpt from a new book by Gerard O’Connell, **America**’s Vatican correspondent. *The Election of Pope Francis: An Inside Account of the Conclave That Changed History* is the first definitive account of that seminal ecclesial event.

Six years on, it is easy to forget just how big a deal this was. The first resignation of a pope in 800 years was followed in quick order by the election of the first Jesuit pope. I was there, in St. Peter’s Square, waiting for the white smoke along with thousands of other cold, wet pilgrims. When night

fell, many of us had started to head out of the square, looking for a place to dry off and have a hot drink, when a roar from the crowd washed over us. White smoke! But who? I am hard of hearing, and when the name was first announced I thought the camerlengo had said “Broglio” rather than “Bergoglio.” For a moment I wondered why the College of Cardinals would have elected an American archbishop who wasn’t even a cardinal. A split second later the Roman woman standing next to me starting yelling “The Jesuit! They’ve elected the Jesuit!”

Indeed, they had elected the Jesuit. This was unheard of, unprecedented, seemingly out of nowhere. In the days leading up to this big moment, I had spoken to dozens of Vatican insiders, reporters and historians. “Who will they pick?” was the question that led every conversation. So intense was the speculation and desire to know what was happening that the conclave’s organizers, according to Mr. O’Connell, went to great measures to prevent the possibility of interception, even choosing “not to use the sound amplification system inside the Sistine Chapel.” Amid all the hubbub, only one person I spoke with told me that the next pope would be Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina. I thought that guy was crazy. Now he is **America**’s Vatican correspondent.

There is no one better qualified to write this story than Gerard O’Connell. The book is a tour de force, expertly reported and crafted in a style that reads at times like a thriller. I hope you will pick up a copy at your local bookstore or Amazon shopping cart, for this will be required reading

for students and scholars for decades to come. Indeed, it is the first and so far definitive draft of this history.

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Many of the folks who make **America** such a special place to work are listed on our masthead in every issue, but there are many more beyond that, including you, our readers, as well as our board of directors and our benefactors. Without the generous support of these men and women, we would not be able to bring you the best in Catholic journalism every day online and every other week in print.

Among that amazing community of supporters, William J. Loschert, a graduate of Fordham University and a longtime supporter of the Jesuits, has been an extraordinary friend to this review. In gratitude for his generosity, our state-of-the-art audio and video studio will be renamed this month the William J. Loschert Studio at **America Media**. Please pray for Bill and for all our community, as we continue to pray for you.

And if you are in New York, please stop by and visit the studio and our new offices. We are located on the Avenue of the Americas, which, while I think we’ve earned the honor, is not in fact named for the magazine.

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



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AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell

Children carry pictures of murdered community activist Samir Flores Soberanes as they walk behind his coffin in Amilcingo, Mexico, Feb. 21. Flores, who was fighting against a plan to build a gas pipeline through his central Mexico town, was killed three days before a public referendum on the project.
Cover: CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

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What are you reading this Lent?

Asked about their Lenten reading habits, respondents reported a variety of books and listed passages from Scripture and other spiritual writings. They also reflected on how their reading habits have changed over the years. The writers Richard Rohr, O.F.M., and the Rev. Henri Nouwen were the most popular among our readers.

Respondents named the Psalms, the Gospels and daily readings, as well as the Book of Proverbs, St. Paul's letters and the Servant Songs in Isaiah as their favorite Scripture readings for Lent.

"For many years, I read only the weekly readings at Mass," wrote Pat Fox of Huntington Station, N.Y. "As I got older, I became a lot more engaged in reading and meditating on what I read."

Chris Jensen of Sacramento, Calif., has "gone from simple devotions to more in-depth reading on prayer and formation."

Other spiritual writers respondents listed were the Rev. William Cleary, John Main, O.S.B., and Laurence Freeman, O.S.B. Multiple respondents mentioned *Tattoos on the Heart*, by Gregory Boyle, S.J. Autobiographical works like Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* and St. Augustine's *Confessions* also featured prominently. Some readers said they are inclined to read philosophical works like Søren Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*.

Also included were books by **America** editors: Kerry Weber's *Mercy in the City* and *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, by James Martin, S.J.

A number of respondents reported dedicating more time to prayer. "I read less and pray more than I used to," wrote Kristeen Bruun of Weatherford, Tex. "Thinking back, there was a time when I did not appreciate Lent in the way I now do. It felt like an interference in my usual routine. Now I look forward to slowing the pace and see that as part of the calling of Lent."

What has been your favorite spiritual reading during Lent?

The Return of the Prodigal Son, by the Rev. Henri Nouwen; *The Universal Christ*, by Richard Rohr, O.F.M.; *Mercy in the City*, by Kerry Weber; *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, by James Martin, S.J.; *Walking the Labyrinth*, by Travis Scholl; *Tattoos on the Heart*, by Gregory Boyle, S.J.; *Barking at the Choir*, by Gregory Boyle, S.J.; *Confessions*, by St. Augustine; *Works of Love*, by Søren Kierkegaard

What parts of Scripture do you like to read during Lent?

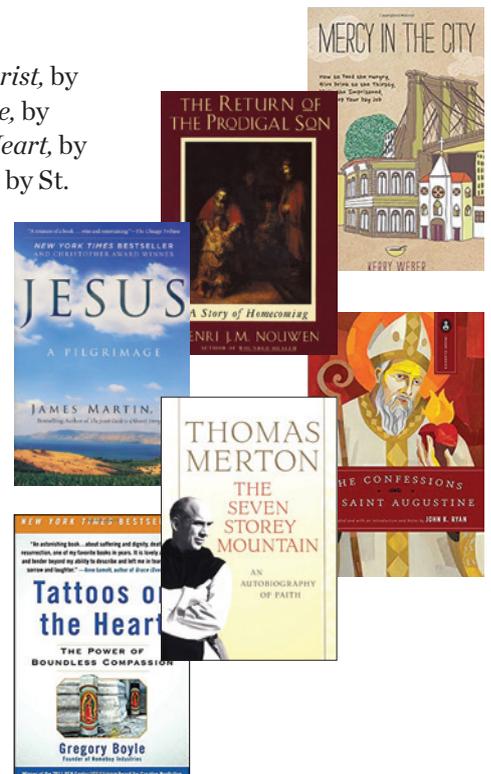
I am reading the Gospel of Luke from the beginning and listening to the Gospel through a feminist perspective, as inspired by Barbara Reid's *Wisdom's Feast*.

Marion Danforth
Weaverville, N.C.

What parts of Scripture do you like to read during Lent?

I always go with the Gospels and a solid ascetical or theological work with a proven track record for helping the reader grow in Christ.

Mark Emery
Pittsburg, Tex.



These results are based on reader responses to a poll promoted on Facebook, Twitter and in our email newsletter.

Faith on Ice

Re “Meet the Most Catholic Team in Hockey,” by Michael McKinley (3/18): My boys have both played hockey since they were four and look up to so many N.H.L. players as role models. The players may not wear their religion on their sleeves, but they are the most humble athletes of any professional sport, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Jennifer Tapak Beaucage

Growing the Kingdom of God

Re “Walking Away From ESPN,” by Nick Genovese (3/18): This is an awesome and beautiful story. Mr. Genovese, you were right to turn down a corporate job that has as its only purpose to grow markets and hence revenue. You are growing the kingdom of God and growing hearts for God. Your return on investment is out of this world.

Jorge Luis Luaces Rabaza

Work in Progress

Re “A History of Catholic School Sports, From Babe Ruth to LeBron James,” by Tom Deignan (3/18): The last line of Mr. Deignan’s article gives me hope. This is a work in progress and one that requires some serious soul searching. I am so torn when it comes to athletics. As a high school principal for 24 years in two Catholic high schools, I saw sports over-emphasized by some for their presumed role in building character and, at the same time, under-emphasized by others who saw competitive athletics as unimportant.

Barry Fitzpatrick

Unwinding Pain

Re “A Profoundly Spiritual Art Exhibit About the Abuse Crisis,” by Jim McDermott, S.J. (3/18): This seems like a very potent art exhibit. I like the idea of using art to help unwind the many knots of pain. I can almost picture in my mind the part of the exhibit that displays children’s sacramental-type clothes in the wind to make them appear as moving children.

Nora Bolcon

Transformation

Re “Brandi Carlile’s Biblical Imagination,” by Justin Klassen (3/18): Thank you for this moving article, which weaves such pertinent and transformative pieces together

so coherently. It touched my heart in a time of personal transition.

Paula Pavanis

Play Ball

Re “Of Liturgy and Line Drives,” by James T. Keane (Of Many Things, 3/18): I like watching my grandkids play sports. Girls were not able to do that when I was growing up. Does my heart good to see them grow and excel and enjoy—to play with a team, to mature, to learn discipline.

Linda Gonzales

Consistent Ethic of Life

Re “Why I Am Pro-Life,” by James Martin, S.J. (3/4): Thank you, Father Martin, for articulating so eloquently the consistent ethic of life expressed by our Catholic social teaching. In his apostolic exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate,” in 2018, Pope Francis says: “Our defense of the innocent unborn...needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person.” Equally sacred are the lives of the poor, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable and elderly. Would that every parish pro-life group would express the same truth.

Elizabeth Gavula

Flourtown, Pa.

Church Renewal

Re “Catholic Schools Reimagined,” by Betsy Shirley (2/4): I read this with interest. The late Msgr. Olin J. Murdick, of the Diocese of Saginaw in Michigan, was an early pioneer in efforts to promote shared responsibility by lay and religious people in Catholic schools in the United States. He developed a theory of Catholic school boards in his doctoral dissertation at the Catholic University of America, and his work remains a valuable model for this church renewal.

Frances Forde Plude

Cleveland, Ohio

Comments drawn from our website, americamagazine.org, and America Media’s social media platforms.

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

The Problem Is Not Just Whom We Elect, But How We Vote

More than a year and a half before the November 2020 presidential election, 16 candidates have begun to campaign for the Democratic nomination. President Trump has already appointed his campaign manager for the race.

An immense amount of energy and attention is being devoted to national politics, but the actual results obtained in policy and governance are wildly disproportionate to the effort expended. Congress frequently has to reach the edge of disaster in order to pass routine spending and borrowing authorizations—and more contentious issues, like immigration reform, can barely be brought to the table for serious legislative debate. Despite evidence that significant majorities support increased border security, oppose building a wall and do not want to deport Dreamers who have grown up in the United States, legislative compromise toward these ends has remained out of reach.

Outbreaks of bipartisanship like

the recent criminal justice reform bill and the votes of 12 Republican senators along with Democrats to reject Mr. Trump's attempt to build a border wall by means of an emergency declaration are worth celebrating. But bipartisanship in itself does not go far enough to fully address the failures of the United States' current political environment. In many cases, the problem is that even when many voters in both parties prefer a policy, electoral dynamics incentivize their representatives to focus on the red-meat issues of the partisan base instead.

Americans need to ask why our democratic institutions have become unresponsive to the desires of large majorities across party lines and are instead subject to a kind of heckler's veto within the parties from passionate but unrepresentative extremists. This is not solely a U.S. problem: Brexit in the United Kingdom has been affected by similar dynamics, in which the only public consensus

seems to be that no one wants what the politicians are able to offer.

These issues require critical scrutiny of U.S. electoral systems. Primaries in gerrymandered legislative districts designed to be "safe" for one party or the other constitute a recipe for electing legislators more responsive to the most strident members of their party's base than to the will of the majority.

There is no silver-bullet solution for improving elections, but some options deserve consideration. Redistricting reform, for example, would deliver districts in which candidates have to compete for the center rather than only for their base.

Perhaps the most significant challenge to electoral reform is the complexity of such measures; they are sometimes hard to explain in sound-bites. Nonetheless, the health of U.S. democracy demands attention to its electoral mechanics. Both candidates and voters should prioritize improving elections.

Lay Catholics Take the Lead

Bishops from around the world left the historic Vatican summit on the protection of minors in February with a clear mandate from Pope Francis to wage an "all-out battle" against the scourge of sexual abuse in the church and society. Some Catholics expressed disappointment that the meeting itself seems not to have produced the "concrete and effective measures" the pope called for in his opening speech. But even once the Vatican acts to hold church leaders accountable, Francis has made clear that protecting children and healing the church will

require a conversion of heart and a cultural change deeper than any top-down decree can achieve.

A new report from the Leadership Roundtable provides a valuable roadmap for what the change might look like. The report provides 50 recommendations for U.S. bishops and lay leaders to address the "twin crises" of abuse and "leadership failures that covered up the abuse." The document, "Heal the Body of Christ," came out of a February gathering of clergy (including three cardinals), abuse experts and laypeople—a process that embodied

one of the key takeaways of the report: the need for "co-responsibility" in the governance of the church.

The report calls for shared responsibility between lay and ordained Catholics in structures to investigate and hold accountable bishops accused of abuse and its cover-up; the selection and appointment of bishops; and seminary formation and the ongoing training of clergy. Lay Catholics bring to the church expertise in management, accounting and communications from the corporate world that can help restore trust in the ability of

Founded in 1909

bishops to respond to allegations of misconduct in a decisive and transparent manner. And as mothers and fathers, they approach the task of protecting children with “the anguish and righteous anger of those who have been sexually abused, their families, and communities,” in the words of the report.

The report also called for a coordinated national effort to release the names of credibly accused priests and religious, among other steps, as a way to advance the principles of transparency, accountability, competency, justice and trust. These recommendations are worthy of serious consideration.

The U.S. bishops who attended the Vatican summit returned to a church that is impatient for decisive action. A growing number of Catholics do not trust that the bishops can implement the needed reforms. A new poll by Gallup found 37 percent of Catholics have considered leaving the Catholic Church because of the sex abuse crisis, up from 22 percent who said the same after the scandal first made national headlines in 2002 (see infographic on Page 14). The bishops need to ask for help from others in the church and cooperate with them to address this challenge. Fortunately, lay Catholics at every level are ready to lend their expertise, leadership and prayers to heal the wounds inflicted on children and the church by abusers and the leaders who failed to stop them.

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College is not for everyone. Catholic schools should recognize that.

American educators often hold up a college degree as the ultimate ticket to a comfortable life, and Catholic schools are not immune to this phenomenon. Catholic high schools are often praised for having close to 100 percent of graduates enroll in college, and those without this kind of track record find it increasingly difficult to remain open.

This is where many have been led astray. I am in my third year of teaching in Catholic schools and my second year of teaching English at Father Judge Catholic High School for Boys, in the Mayfair neighborhood of Philadelphia. Most of our students go on to college, but many join the military, enter a trade school or apprenticeship or go straight to the workforce.

We are proud of the different paths our students have taken after graduation and of the “Judge guys” who have chosen to serve in the armed forces, as well as in police and fire departments. Teachers here know that a four-year college is not the only way to help our graduates live up to the motto coined by our patron, St. Francis de Sales: “Be who you are and be that well.”

This is not a criticism of my students, who are clever, capable and ambitious. But some genuinely do not wish to pursue a four-year college degree. They may devote their lives to protecting others, caring for the outdoors, building homes, maintaining computers or working trades that do not always require a bachelor’s degree.

And a college degree is not the ticket to financial security it once was. College graduates in the United States now carry a collective \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt, with the class of 2016 carrying an average debt of \$37,172 (not counting graduate school

debt). A bachelor’s degree does not always lead to a job that pays well enough to repay these loans in a reasonable time frame. Why should students with no love for academics sink themselves into so much debt when there is no guarantee they can pay it off?

The metaphor I use when discussing college with students is this: College is like a pair of soccer cleats that cost \$1,000 and are guaranteed to help you play better, but in order to buy the cleats you will need to put them on your credit card and pay them off with interest. I do not love playing soccer, nor will I ever make a living playing soccer, so why would I put myself into debt to get these cleats that I do not want or need?

I never have and never will tell a student that they are not “cut out” for college. What I do say to my students is that if they want to pursue a college degree they should enjoy an academic challenge or be positive that they need the degree to pursue their passion. The bottom line is that college is extremely expensive, and nobody should pay so much money for something that they don’t enjoy and don’t know if they will use.

But college preparatory academies with high tuition are the only Catholic high schools left in too many communities. The history of U.S. Catholic schools is one of uplifting people and communities at the margins of society; what a loss it would be if they served only high-achieving students whose families can afford to pay upward of \$20,000 per year.

Catholic high schools can better prepare our graduates for the world that awaits them by introducing career and technical education (C.T.E.) programs, as Father Judge plans to

do this fall. These programs allow students to take some required academic courses over the summer, while taking courses during the school year that allow them to become certified welders, electricians, plumbers, chefs, mechanics or other practitioners of trades. At graduation they can walk across the stage and right into a job that will immediately pay them enough money to begin a life of their own.

Perhaps, as they mature, they will wish to change career paths and return to school. They may even be able to pay for it without depending on predatory loans, thanks to military benefits or the competitive salaries they obtained because of C.T.E. programs. The experience such students bring to college after serving in the military or working full-time can only make them greater assets to any campus.

This is both an economic and a social justice issue. Catholic schools can reaffirm their commitment to the Gospel’s call and realize their mission of serving the needs of all and not just the privileged few. If we allow Catholic education to be associated only with college preparatory schools, we have made the tacit admission that only the wealthy and top academic achievers are deserving of a Catholic education. But others are just as worthy of a faith-centered education. Catholic schools must not only make room for them but meet their needs with equal care and attention.

Mary McAuliffe is a second-year teaching fellow with the Alliance for Catholic Education at Saint Joseph’s University, a two-year service program in which fellows teach in Philadelphia Catholic schools.

Persecuted: The Hopes and Challenges of Christians in the Middle East

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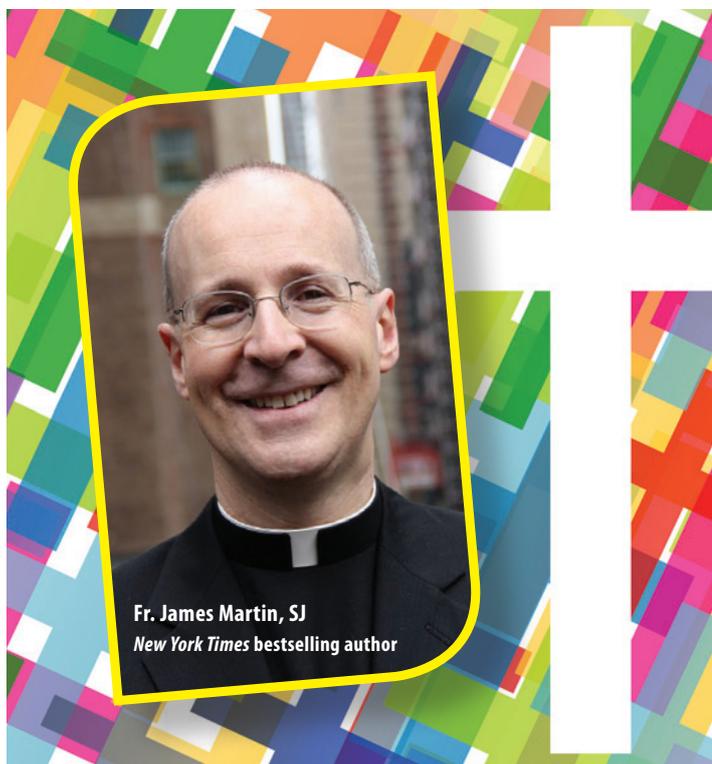
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with Fr. James Martin, SJ**

9:30 AM – 2:00 PM (Arrival after 8:00 AM)

**"Beloved of God" Morning of Prayer for
LGBT Catholics & Their Families**

4:00 PM

**"A Good Measure: Showing Welcome and Respect
for LGBT People & Their Families"
Public Lecture & Book Signing**

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, adults only
Dinner Reception (Registration is limited.)

Questions? Contact Melinda Leonowitz at
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Fear of an uncertain future unites Europe's Yellow Vest and climate change protesters

By Melissa Vida



At first glance, the worker-demonstrators wearing emergency yellow vests and protesting for economic equity on the streets of Paris seem to have little in common with the schoolchildren all over Europe skipping class to demand more action against climate change. But despite divides in age and economic status, the protesters may be motivated by similar underlying concerns, according to officials with both the French and Belgian churches.

March 15 was an important day for both movements. French schoolchildren joined what is being called a Global Youth Strike to raise awareness for their cause. The same day a nationwide series of debates suggested by President Emmanuel Macron, in which local political leaders listened to voters' complaints and suggestions, came to a close. Now the federal government is preparing to hammer out a response.

Grégoire Catta, S.J., director of the National Service for Family and Society at the French Bishops' Confer-

ence, believes the church can deliver a "deep diagnosis" to respond to the contemporary anxieties expressed by these movements. The key to both, he said, can be found by filtering their demands through Catholic social teaching and, in particular, Pope Francis' environmental encyclical "Laudato Si'."

The so-called Yellow Vest demonstrations gained force last November and have not stopped. In Paris, the grassroots movement began in general outrage against higher fuel taxes but evolved into a broad demand from outlying and rural communities in France for more participative democracy and social justice. Eleven people have died during the sometimes violent protests, and thousands of others have been injured or arrested.

The movement is named after the high-visibility clothing worn by demonstrators. French law requires drivers to keep the safety gear handy in case of an accident, but protesters have found the yellow vests to be a convenient and

Yellow Vest protesters march near the Eiffel Tower in Paris on March 2.

unifying call to arms because of their association with working-class industries.

A few weeks after the Yellow Vests took to the streets, thousands of schoolchildren throughout Europe and other countries around the world began walking out of classes each week to press politicians to adopt more ambitious policies to tackle climate change.

“The ecological issue is linked to the social issue,” Father Catta, who has been involved in local and national discussions with the Yellow Vests, said. “It is clear that something is wrong, and the pope invites us to change our paradigm.” Father Catta sees in these movements a rejection of consumerism, which is a theme at the heart of “Laudato Si’.”

People are pressed to buy and consume, he said, but purchasing power is dwindling and unmoderated consumption leads to pollution. “It gives rise to the destruction of the earth, on the one hand, and then the destruction of people on the other,” Father Catta added, because “people feel invisible when they are unable to consume.” One response: The Yellow Vests have called protests to block shoppers at big supermarkets in an attempt to hurt the companies’ profits.

Protestors from both movements are demanding that governments listen to their fears about the future. “There is a very deep anguish in the elderly [in France] as well in the middle classes; they are afraid of falling into poverty,” Marcel Rémon, S.J., told **America**. Father Rémon is the director of Ceras, the Center for Research and Social Action in Paris.

Father Rémon said that young people face an unstable job market as long-term employment contracts have become rare; at the same time, they worry about the environment. “They say, ‘When I’ll be 50, the earth will be [ruined],’” he added.

He warned against conflating the two movements, however. “We should not be naïve,” Father Catta said, as there are “tensions” between the two because of generational and class differences. The young climate demonstrators are thought to come from more affluent families than the older workers of the Yellow Vest movement.

And while the young marching for environmental protection can clearly find common ground with the plea to care for the earth in “Laudato Si’,” the Yellow Vests marked their first success when the French government backtracked on the fuel tax hike, which hit people hardest outside urban centers. The tax hike was seen as part of an effort to reduce carbon emissions, in accordance with the Paris Accord to minimize climate change.

But Frédéric Rottier, president of the Belgian Jesuit association Centre Avec, said the Yellow Vests are not necessarily at odds with environmentalism. As governments pursue ways to transition to greener policies, “we need to make sure the ecological transition is [economically] sustainable,” he said. “The weight of it needs to be appropriately distributed.”

In Belgium, where most workers are unionized, the Yellow Vest movement lost steam when traditional unions organized a nationwide strike. By shutting or slowing down hospitals, airports and public transit, the Belgian unions pressured employers to increase wages—and succeeded. “It shows that in the end, it is better when unions take matters into their own hands,” the Most Rev. Jean-Pierre Delville, the bishop of Liege, Belgium, told **America**.

In France, unions and the church are struggling to understand and respond to the demands of the Yellow Vests. Bishops called on local parishes to hold discussions so that members can discuss their troubles and listen to each other according to Catholic social teaching principles.

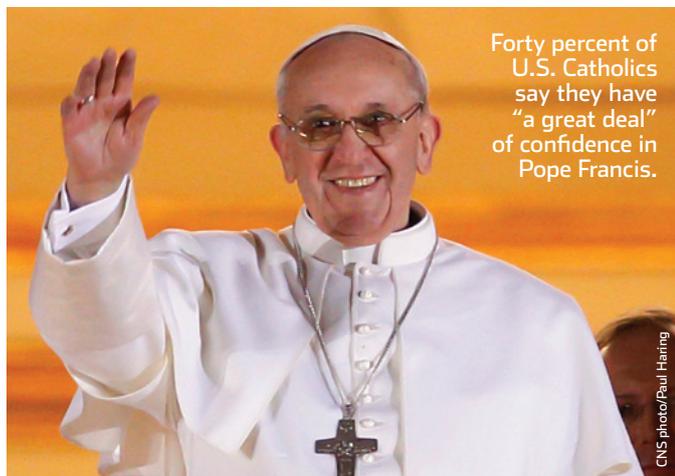
“It’s rather a new phenomenon in the church,” Father Rémon said. “It’s not every day that bishops ask parishioners to talk about social issues.” The talks are being held within the government-led Great National Debate, which was launched by President Macron in January.

Hampering the church’s role in these important civic discussions, however, has been its loss of credibility and authority because of the global sexual abuse crisis, according to Father Rémon. To help rebuild its standing, the church, he said, needs to “listen again to God’s people and strengthen the culture of debate and dialogue.”

Melissa Vida, *Brussels correspondent*.
Twitter: @MelissaVidaa.



Gallup survey shows Catholics wavering because of abuse crisis



Forty percent of U.S. Catholics say they have “a great deal” of confidence in Pope Francis.

CNS photo/Paul Haring

More U.S. Catholics are questioning whether they should remain in the church today than when news of the child sex abuse scandal broke in the Archdiocese of Boston in 2002, according to a poll released on March 13 by Gallup. More than a third of U.S. Catholics—37 percent—surveyed in January and February said they have questioned whether they should remain in the church, up from 22 percent in 2002, when the Boston Globe Spotlight team published its report detailing widespread child sex abuse by priests in the city.

The shift comes in the wake of the 1,300-page grand jury report released by Pennsylvania’s attorney general in August 2018, which included accounts of alleged sexual abuse by hundreds of Catholic priests against more than 1,000 children in that state over a 70-year time span. That bad news was compounded by allegations of an abuse cover-up in Chile; the conviction of Cardinal George Pell of Australia in February on charges of sexually abusing two choirboys in the 1990s; and the removal of former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick from the priesthood after allegations that the onetime archbishop of Washington, D.C., sexually abused seminarians and a minor earlier in his career.

Pope Francis attempted to address the scandal by hosting a four-day conference at the Vatican in February on the subject, but many advocates for survivors left the gathering disappointed by what they saw as a lack of concrete action.

Even so, Gallup reports that most American Catholics still largely support Pope Francis, with 58 percent saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in him. Only 30 percent said the same about U.S. bishops and other Catholic leaders in the country.

Jack Jenkins, *Religion News Service*

A BIGGER IMPACT THAN BOSTON

As a result of the recent news about sexual abuse of young people by priests, have you, personally, questioned whether you would remain in the Catholic Church?

	Yes	No
2019	37	62
2002	22	76

OF THOSE ANSWERING, ‘YES’

	Attend church weekly	Attend nearly weekly/monthly	Seldom/never attend
2019	22	37	46
2002	12	24	29

MORE CONFIDENCE IN PARISH PRIESTS, POPE FRANCIS

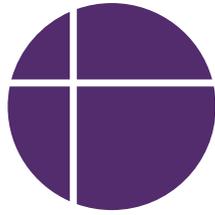
How much confidence do you have in each of the following—a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little/none
The priests at your church	41	18	24	13
Pope Francis	40	18	28	13
Catholic priests in the U.S.	20	12	43	25
U.S. bishops and other Catholic leaders in this country	19	11	42	26

OF THOSE SAYING THEY HAVE A GREAT DEAL OR QUITE A LOT OF CONFIDENCE:

	Attend church weekly	Attend nearly weekly/monthly	Seldom/never attend
The priests at your church	86	64	39
Pope Francis	68	61	50
Catholic priests in the U.S.	48	30	22
U.S. bishops and other Catholic leaders in this country	49	27	21

Source: Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 21-27 and Feb. 12-28, 2019, with a random sample of 581 Catholics, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on this sample of Catholics, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.



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A 'truth teller' resigns from Trudeau's cabinet

The scandal is another disappointment for Canada's Indigenous people

Canada's former Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould arrives to testify before the House of Commons Justice Committee in Ottawa on Feb. 27.

In testimony before Canada's House of Commons on Feb. 27, former Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould described pressure to go easy on bribery and fraud charges against the Quebec-based multinational engineering firm SNC-Lavalin. She said her final weeks as attorney general were filled with "veiled threats" and inappropriate "pressure to intervene" in the case from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his staff.

After being transferred to Veterans Affairs in a cabinet reshuffling in January, she resigned altogether on Feb. 12. The scandal that followed has rocked the nation's political establishment, but it has also become another in a series of disappointments for Indigenous people in Canada since Mr. Trudeau began his first term in 2015. Ms. Wilson-Raybould, a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation, was the sole Indigenous member of his cabinet.

"Jody Wilson-Raybould's treatment by the current government joins a long list of betrayals since settlement began in Canada," said Deacon Rennie Nahanee, a Catholic elder in the Squamish Nation, in an email to **America**.

"One of the foremost ways to bring about reconciliation in Canada after the closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to have Indigenous people working in positions of authority in all institutions, whereby real changes can be made for the benefit of Indigenous peoples," said Mr. Nahanee. "Jody gave hope that real changes were taking place in the government."

"[I]t has always been my view that the attorney general of Canada must be nonpartisan, more transparent in the principles that are the basis of decisions and, in this respect, always willing to speak truth to power," Ms. Wilson-Raybould told Canadian legislators.

"I come from a long line of matriarchs and I'm a truth teller, in accordance with the laws and traditions of our Big House," she told Canadian legislators. "This is who I am

and this is who I always will be," she said.

Mr. Trudeau has denied that he or anyone in his office tried to direct Ms. Wilson-Raybould to make a particular decision on SNC-Lavalin. The firm has been accused of paying \$48 million in bribes to public officials in Libya as well as of defrauding Libyan companies out of almost \$130 million. If convicted in a criminal trial, the company could be ineligible to bid on contracts with the federal government in Canada for a decade.

Another member of Mr. Trudeau's cabinet, Jane Philpott, resigned on March 4, noting that she had "lost confidence in how the government has dealt with this matter and in how it has responded to the issues raised." Her departure was also seen as a significant loss by Indigenous leaders who knew Ms. Philpott from her days as minister of Indigenous Services.

According to Global News Ipsos, the scandal has already cost the Liberal Party: 55 percent of Canadians said it will affect how they vote in Canada's federal election this fall, and 67 percent said they believed the version of events told by Ms. Wilson-Raybould over Mr. Trudeau's account. Almost two-thirds of those polled said Mr. Trudeau has lost the "moral authority" to govern.

Looking down the road to this year's federal election in October, Mr. Nahanee believes the choice for voters will still be difficult. "It's a tough call, to go with the devil you know or the one you don't know." Regardless, he says, "other Indigenous people need to run for office, so that their voices may be heard and, possibly, changes can happen in our lifetime."

Mr. Nahanee added that the current scandal is part of a history of "continuous colonization of Canada," which has cost Indigenous people land and rights. "In a sense, it seems like business as usual for the Liberal government," he said.

Dean Dettloff, *Toronto correspondent*.
Twitter: @deandettloff.

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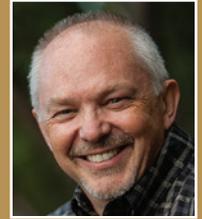
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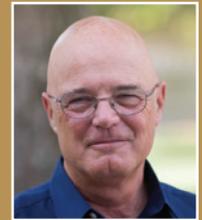
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GOODNEWS: Asylum seekers find a temporary home in the Casa Alitas monastery



In Tucson, hundreds of asylum seekers are making a former Benedictine monastery their temporary home. After passing an initial screening at the U.S.-Mexico border, they have received permission to remain in the United States until a court hearing. Most are on their way to another U.S. city.

Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona moved the Casa Alitas shelter for asylum seekers to the monastery in January. Its previous location could not accommodate the recent influx of asylum seekers. The Benedictine sisters left the monastery last year, and the new owner has offered the use of the vacant property through the end of May.

Ali Hofer first began serving at the Casa Alitas (“House of Angels’ Wings”) shelter as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. After a year of service, she stayed on as a site coordinator, working with both local volunteers and asylum seekers. By the time the migrants arrive at the monastery, they have been in the United States for anywhere from a few hours to five days, she said. Last week, the monastery received more than 200 from El Paso.

As they walk into the monastery, the migrants see flags from several countries in the hallway. The first stop is the chapel, which Ms. Hofer said helps the asylum seek-

ers realize they are no longer in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The majority of the migrants are from Guatemala, she said, though there are also families from Honduras, Mexico and El Salvador. They have also had guests from Brazil and Uzbekistan.

“We use Google translate if we have to,” Ms. Hofer said. “We work it out.”

Jarvin González-Muñoz left Honduras with his 6-year-old daughter Katty on Feb. 15. They left behind his wife and 10-month-old son.

“You cannot live there,” he said. “There’s no work. The crime is out of control.”

Honduras has had one of the highest murder rates in the world since 2010. The Central American nation has struggled economically, especially since a 2009 military coup.

“Separating yourself from your family is hard, but you don’t do this because it feels good,” Mr. González-Muñoz said. “It’s hard, but what choice do we have? But we are here now, and God will help us.”

Wilson Simón left Guatemala with his son, 5-year-old Hamilton. His wife stayed behind with his other two children. He spoke to his son in Mam, a Mayan language. His son does not speak Spanish very well.



Photo by J.D. Long-García

Five-year-old Hamilton Simón came from Honduras to the Casa Alitas shelter with his father seeking asylum.

Mr. Simón said he was on his way to Ohio. “I’m going to work there so I can send money back to my family,” he said.

“Since I myself am an immigrant, I’ve gone through my own hardships,” said Isaac Ortiz Carrasco, a 17-year-old high school student, born in Chile, who is a shelter volunteer. “It’s my duty to help people. I know what they’ve gone through.”

“A lot of times, when you talk to them, the curtains just come down,” he said of hearing the asylum seekers’ stories. “I want them to know that the world has not given up on them. Even though we’re all different, we’re all connected.”

Alvin Carranza and his daughter Valerie were on their way to South Carolina “to work, if God allows it,” the Honduran migrant said. “In our country, there is a lot of poverty and crime. They kill people every day.”

As he spoke, his daughter colored a picture of a dog.

“Look how happy she is,” he said. “They’ve treated me well [at the former monastery]. I have a great deal of hope that I didn’t have before. I feel like I’m home.”

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



Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane at the Vatican summit on the protection of minors

Photo by Michael Sainsbury

‘We dare not fail’: Australia’s top bishop on the church’s sex abuse crisis

The Catholic Church in Australia has again come under the spotlight with the conviction of Cardinal George Pell for historical sexual offenses. **America** interviewed Archbishop Mark Coleridge, the president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, on Feb. 25 in Rome, where he was attending the summit on the protection of minors.

In Australia, he said, the credibility of the bishops and clergy “has been hugely damaged.... You have a situation where if you do a word association and you say ‘Catholic Church,’ ‘abuse’ would be the answer.”

Archbishop Coleridge sees this loss of credibility in the public forum “when trying to engage the political world or other elements of society. I don’t have anything like the access or the influence that my predecessors had.”

But he believes the crisis “is forcing us to come to grips with the Vatican II vision of the church.”

He said that “three or four times during the summit that thought came to me with great clarity and power: that it would take this horror almost to force us to really enter in a new way, in a new depth, what the Spirit was saying to the church in the Second Vatican Council.”

“It’s been forced upon us,” he said, “and in that, I do see these strange disruptions of the Holy Spirit. It’s grace, a searing grace that we would never have sought or expected, but it’s upon us.”

And in the aftermath of the summit, he said, “we dare not fail, because at stake...really is the mission of the church, not only credibility and trust, which are central to that, but the whole effectiveness of the church’s mission and the possibility of it.”

Gerard O’Connell, *Vatican correspondent.*
Twitter: @gerryorome.

Inside the Election of Pope Francis

An exclusive report

By Gerard O'Connell

The following excerpts are drawn from The Election of Pope Francis: An Inside Account of the Conclave That Changed History (Orbis Books, 2019), by Gerard O'Connell, America's Vatican correspondent. We join O'Connell's tale on March 13, after the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on Feb. 28, 2013, and the calling of a conclave to elect his successor. Those 115 cardinals eligible to vote in a papal conclave have gathered in Rome and have been sequestered under heavy security in the Sistine Chapel inside the Vatican, where they will conduct secret votes at regular intervals until a new pope is elected with two thirds of the votes.

What took place next inside the Sistine Chapel was hidden from the outside world. Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re first explained the voting process and then asked the cardinals if they were ready to vote. They were! Everyone was anxious to do so, as this would reveal where the Holy Spirit was leading them. The first phase of the process began with the distribution of ballot sheets to the electors. Before the voting started, and in accordance with the apostolic constitution “Universi Dominici Gregis,” the most junior cardinal elector then extracted at random the names of three “scrutineers,” three “infirmarii” and three “revisers” to supervise the first voting session.

The second phase was the secret ballot. Each cardinal had before him a ballot form, rectangular in shape, on which were printed in Latin the words “*Eligo in Summum Pontificem*” (“I elect as Supreme Pontiff”), and underneath there was a space for the name of the person to whom he wished to give his vote. The electors were expected to write in such a way that they could not be easily recognized by their handwriting. Once the cardinal completed his ballot form, he had to fold it lengthwise, so that the name of the person he voted for could not be seen.



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano

Msgr. Guido Marini, master of papal liturgical ceremonies, closes the doors to the Sistine Chapel as cardinals from around the world begin the conclave to elect a successor to Pope Benedict XVI.

Black smoke billows from the chimney on the Sistine Chapel in this still image taken from video. The black smoke indicated that the cardinals had not elected a new pope during the morning voting session of the conclave's second day.

Once all the electors had written the name of their chosen candidate and folded the ballot sheets, then each cardinal took his ballot sheet between the thumb and index finger and, holding the ballot aloft so that it could be seen, carried it to the altar at which the scrutineers stood and where there was an urn, made of silver and gilded bronze by the Italian sculptor Cecco Bonanotte, with an image of the Good Shepherd on it. The urn was covered by a similarly gilded plate to receive the ballot sheets.

On arrival at the altar, the cardinal elector stood under the awesome painting of Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" and pronounced the following oath in a clear and audible voice: "I call as my witness Christ the Lord, who will be my judge, that my vote is given to the one who, before God, I think should be elected." He then placed his ballot sheet on the plate and tilted the plate in such a way that the sheet fell into the urn. Finally, he bowed in reverence to the cross and returned to his seat, and the next elector then walked to the altar.

After all 115 electors had cast their votes, the three scrutineers came forward to count them. It was a moment of high tension. Everybody watched the ritual with rapt attention. The first scrutineer shook up the ballot sheets in the urn, which was first used at the last conclave, to mix them. Then another scrutineer began to count them, taking each ballot form separately from the first urn and transferring it to a second urn, exactly like the first, that was empty. The constitution decrees that if that the number of ballot sheets cast does not correspond exactly to the number of electors present then that round of balloting is declared null and void.

When the number of ballot sheets corresponds exactly to the number of electors, the process continues with the opening of the ballots. The three scrutineers sit at the table in front of the altar. The first opens the ballot sheet, reads the name silently, and passes it to the second scrutineer. The second does likewise, and then passes it to the third, who reads the name written on the sheet and then, in a loud voice, announces it to the whole assembly and next records it on a paper prepared for this purpose.

The windows of the Sistine Chapel had been blacked out. But that was considered totally inadequate given the advanced state of modern communications technology and the risk of electronic interception so, as in 2005, the conclave organizers took high-security measures to prevent the possibility of transmission by smartphone from inside and electronic interception by outside agencies or indi-

viduals. They installed state-of-the-art jamming systems, including a Faraday cage. The floor of the chapel had been raised about one meter and covered with wooden boards for installation of the system.

This time, however, the organizers went even further than at the last conclave to prevent the possibility of interception; they took the extraordinary decision not to use the sound-amplification system inside the Sistine Chapel. The reason for this, it seems, goes back to the 2005 conclave, when the Swiss Guard standing on duty outside the doors of the chapel could sometimes hear what was being said inside, especially when the vote counts were announced over the P.A. system.

Consequently, before the first vote, Cardinal Re asked Cardinal Juan Sandoval Íñiguez, the 79-year-old emeritus archbishop of Guadalajara, who was known to have a powerful voice, to stand in the middle of the chapel and proclaim in a loud voice the names read out by the third scrutineer.

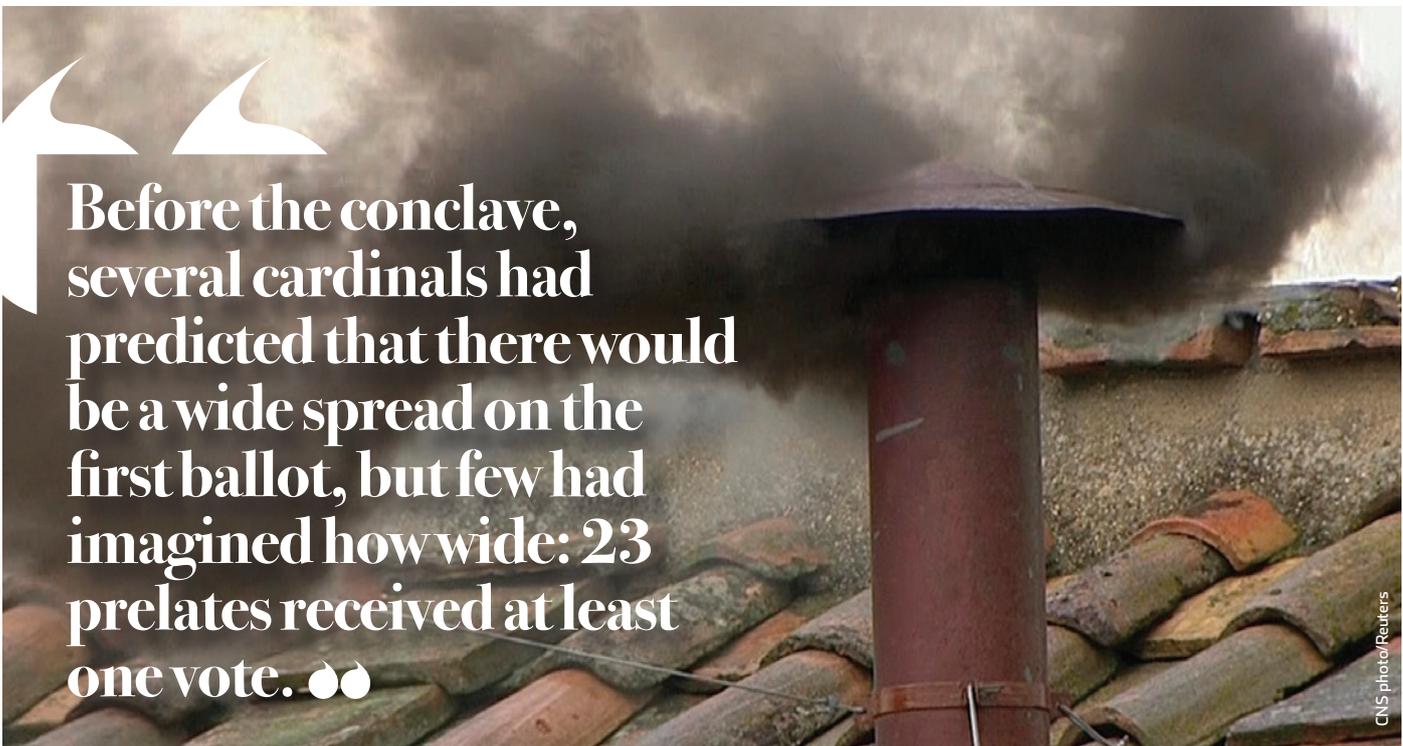
As the third scrutineer read out a name on a ballot sheet, Cardinal Sandoval repeated it so that all could hear. There was an air of high suspense inside the Sistine Chapel as the results were being announced. For the first time the electors were revealing their choices; they were putting their cards on the table.

After reading out the name on each individual ballot, the third scrutineer pierced the sheet through the word "Eligo" with a needle and thread; this was done to combine and preserve the ballots. When the names on all the ballots had been read out, a knot was fastened at each end of the thread and the joined ballots were set aside.

This was followed by the third and last phase of the voting process, which began with adding up the votes each individual had received. The results held several big surprises.

Before the conclave, several cardinals had predicted that there would be a wide spread on the first ballot, but few had imagined how wide: 23 prelates received at least one vote on the first ballot; this meant that one out of every five cardinals present got at least one vote, with four cardinals getting 10 or more votes. The top five vote-getters in the first round were as follows:

Scola 30
Bergoglio 26
Ouellet 22
O'Malley 10
Scherer 4



Before the conclave, several cardinals had predicted that there would be a wide spread on the first ballot, but few had imagined how wide: 23 prelates received at least one vote. ●●

CNS photo/Reuters

Angelo Scola came first with 30 votes, but he did not receive as many votes as had been predicted by some cardinals and the Italian media.

The big surprise was Jorge Bergoglio, who came in at second place, close behind Scola, with 26 votes. His total, in fact, would have been 27 if an elector had not misspelled his name, writing “Broglio” instead of Bergoglio on the ballot sheet. It was a most promising start for the archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Marc Ouellet scored well, too, better than expected, and arrived in third place, having obtained 22 votes. He seemed a strong candidate.

Seán O’Malley was a surprise also; with 10 votes, he became the first American in history to score so highly in any papal election.

On the other hand, Odilo Pedro Scherer, the much-touted Brazilian, had a surprisingly low score; he got a mere four votes.

Besides these front-runners, five cardinals received two votes each in that first ballot: Christoph Schönborn, Peter Turkson, George Pell, Laurent Monswengo Pasinya and Timothy Dolan.

Another 13 cardinals got one vote each: Audrys Backis, Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, Ennio Antonelli, Carlo Caffarra, André Vingt-Trois, Gracias, Thomas Collins, Luis Antonio Tagle, Leonardo Sandri, Robert Sarah, Mauro Piacenza, Gianfranco Ravasi and “Broglio” (which seemed an obvious misspelling of Bergoglio).

The voting process ended with the burning of the bal-

lots. After a final check of the report sheets on which the scrutineers had recorded the votes, the ballot sheets and the reports were taken to one of the two specially installed stoves at the back left-hand side of the Sistine Chapel as one faces the altar.

The two stoves join together in one flue that is connected to the chimney erected outside the chapel, a chimney that was now the center of attention for the world’s media. The origin of the stove goes back to the 18th century, when the master of ceremonies came up with the brilliant idea of communicating to the world whether or not a new pope has been elected by discharging white or black smoke from the chapel chimney as the ballot sheets and records are burned.

Following the norms for the election process, the ballots from the first vote at this conclave were burned in the older stove, which has been used at every conclave since 1939. This was done by one of the scrutineers, with the assistance of the secretary of the conclave, Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, who had been re-admitted after the votes had been counted. As they began the burning, they activated an electronic smoke-producing device in the newer stove, first used at the 2005 conclave, which contained a cartridge containing five types of chemical mixtures that can produce black or white smoke as required. As per the rulebook, the burning and smoke-signal operation had to be completed before the cardinals left the Sistine Chapel.

Given that no candidate had gained the two-thirds majority on the first vote, the ballot sheets were burned, the

electronic smoke producing device was activated, and at 7:41 p.m. (Rome time), black smoke streamed forth from the slender rust-colored chimney of the Sistine Chapel, announcing to the world that no pope had been elected.

The sight of the black smoke provoked an audible *Nooooo* from the thousands of faithful and tourists huddled in the cold under multi-colored umbrellas in St. Peter's Square and wearing raincoats, plastic ponchos or other waterproof gear to protect themselves from the incessant rain. They stood there, constantly shifting their gaze from the small chimney to the maxi-screens in St. Peter's Square, lit by a spotlight that showed the live scene as television units and radio networks from many countries that were located outside the square broke the news to a global audience....

To an outsider, that scattered first vote might have given the impression of great uncertainty, but the electors saw it in a very different light. Cardinal Oswald Gracias, for example, told me he read it this way: "The Holy Spirit was indicating already, the Holy Spirit was leading us in a particular direction. God was there right through." Several other cardinals told me they had interpreted the first vote in a way that was similar to that of Gracias.

The vote revealed several things. It showed that Scola was the only strong European candidate in line to succeed Benedict, and while this pastor and eminent theologian had support, it was at the lower end of what had been expected on the eve of the conclave, when cardinals and much of the Italian press had anticipated that he would be out in front with around 40 votes. Naturally, this came as a disappointment to his supporters.

More important, the vote confirmed what many already knew or suspected: the 28 Italian electors were deeply divided about Scola. Indeed, as the history of the last two conclaves (October 1978 and April 2005) showed, when the Italians are divided, an Italian will not be elected. Was history about to repeat itself? That first ballot seemed to indicate to many electors that the next pope would not be European; he would come from the Americas. It also left little doubt that Scherer was out of the race; he was seen as the candidate of the status quo in a conclave that was looking for radical change. Apart from Scola, the result left three other candidates standing: Bergoglio, Ouellet and O'Malley, in that order.

The archbishop of Boston had much in his favor: He is a pastor, well liked, with a simple lifestyle; he speaks Spanish fluently and has a sterling track record on handling cases of sexual abuse of minors by clergy. Nevertheless, while



before the conclave many cardinals affirmed publicly that nationality was not an issue, the truth was few wanted a pope from the world's main superpower. To elect an American, even if he happened to be a Franciscan friar, would not have gone down well in the Southern Hemisphere or in the churches of the developing world. O'Malley, a friend and admirer of Bergoglio, shared that view.

Cardinal Ouellet had scored much better than expected in the first vote, and he was in a strong position. As the cardinals discussed his candidacy in small groups and one-to-one conversations that Tuesday night, March 12, they recognized several positive factors in favor of this polyglot Canadian. He had pastoral experience as a priest in Colombia and as archbishop in Quebec. Important, too, was the fact that he knew the Vatican from the inside, having worked first in the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and since 2010 in the powerful Congregation for Bishops. Notwithstanding this very positive side, several cardinals said they found him "uninspiring" and "ordinary" and felt that his track record in the Roman Curia gave rise to serious questions about his ability to govern under pressure. These questions, now transformed into serious reservations, surfaced in conversations that first night in the Santa Marta guest house and led many undecided electors to conclude that if he could not govern well in the Roman Curia, he might not be able to govern the Catholic Church.



Cardinals concelebrated the Mass for the Election of a Pope in St. Peter's Basilica on March 12, 2013. Some 170 cardinals participated, including 115 under age 80 who entered the conclave in the Sistine Chapel that afternoon.

At the same time, however, Ouellet had some highly influential supporters besides the Americans. Among them was Cardinal Joachim Meissner, the archbishop of Cologne, Germany, since 1989 and for nine years before that archbishop of Berlin. Widely considered the leading “conservative” in the German church, he was known to be very close to John Paul II and a life-long friend of Joseph Ratzinger. He wanted to ensure that the next pope would faithfully follow the line and vision of his two predecessors. And so, that Tuesday night in Santa Marta, he was seen standing outside the door of his room urging fellow electors, “Vote for Ouellet! Bergoglio is too old!”

As for Bergoglio, the first vote revealed that he was indeed a strong candidate, stronger than many had realized. There were many factors in Bergoglio's favor. He was known to be a very holy man, a humble, intelligent, inspiring pastor, devoid of ambition, who avoided the limelight, lived a simple life and had a passionate love for the poor. He had never lived or studied in Rome and did not have a Roman outlook. He had governed the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires for 15 years in a truly pastoral way, with decisiveness, prudence and creativity; he had a talent for government. Ever since the 2001 synod his stature had grown internationally, and at the Celam meeting in Aparecida, Brazil, in May 2007, he had emerged as the undisputed leader of the church in this region, where almost 50 percent of the world's Catholics live. Above all, he was a man of courage with a vision, a missionary vision, able to open new hori-

zons for the church, a man committed to dialogue—with Jews, with Muslims, with other Christians and with those who professed no faith. He was above all a pastor. His brief intervention in the General Congregation as well as his interaction with many cardinals during these days had revealed this clearly.

As the undecided electors considered whom to cast their vote for the following morning, three factors leaned heavily in Bergoglio's favor: First, the great majority of Latin American cardinals were supporting him, with not one of them speaking badly about him; second, he had revealed his ability to communicate and inspire when he had given his brief but refreshing intervention in the General Congregation; and third, he had support from Asians and Africans as well as Europeans. In addition, 68 electors who had participated in the 2005 conclave knew him as runner-up then, and several—like Maradiaga, Monswengo, Walter Kasper, Jean-Louis Tauran, Turkson, Gracias and others, too—did not disguise their active support for him.

The undecided had this night to make up their minds; tomorrow morning, they would have to cast their votes again....

Gerard O'Connell is *America's* vatican correspondent.



KICKSTARTING CREATIVITY

Can better corporate organization humanize the marketplace? By Thomas More Garrett

The brown-brick exterior of the former pencil factory on Kent Street in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood seems little changed from the late 19th century. But where one might expect to see dusty, empty pallets spread across a vacant shop floor, there is instead a courtyard of ferns, swamp azalea and other indigenous plants. On the rooftop is a garden with blueberry bushes, various vegetable plants and flowers.

Around that courtyard and below the garden is a sea of LED lights. Casually but smartly dressed young urbanites rush to and fro, some of them accompanied by their pet dog, in an open workspace. Colleagues sip coffee over spreadsheets in a restaurant-style booth to the side of a kitchen area. There is an auditorium and, past a row of conference rooms filled with natural light, a library with leather armchairs. This is the headquarters of Kickstarter, both a cradle for creative projects and a new way of doing business.

Since its launch in 2009, the global funding platform has matched a growing number of would-be creators—more than 150,000—with people willing to fund them. While it has raised money for everything from video games to picnic coolers to the Pebble smartwatch, Kickstarter focuses on artistic endeavors like music, graphic design and publishing. Independent films also make up a significant number of its projects. Within three years of its incep-

tion, Kickstarter was distributing more funds in support of arts-related projects than the National Endowment for the Arts, according to Forbes. (The New York Times writer Rob Walker even dubbed it “the people’s N.E.A.”). The company says its mission is to “help bring creative projects to life” through its internet platform and ancillary services.

Kickstarter could have been an upstart darling turned I.P.O., or a high-value acquisition for a larger tech company. It could have taken the path of its Brooklyn neighbor Etsy and aimed to show that e-commerce sites for small-scale ventures can acquire symbols on Nasdaq tickers.

Neither is Kickstarter a public foundation or a private charity. Rather, it generates profit by helping others achieve success for otherwise cash-starved creative ventures.

Here is how Kickstarter works. Let us say someone has an idea for a new board game but needs money to fund the project. The person posts the details of the plan on Kickstarter's website, offering non-equity-based rewards in exchange for various levels of financial support. These rewards could be anything from the inclusion of a supporter's name on the product's packaging to dinner with the product's creator. If enough money is raised, the plan goes forward. If not, the project is canceled and the funds are returned. Kickstarter collects 5 percent of the amount raised by successful projects. The company has been profitable since 2010.



Photo by J.D. Long-Garcia

On the rooftop of Kickstarter's headquarters in Brooklyn's Greenpoint is a garden with blueberry bushes, various vegetable plants and flowers.



Perry Chen, Kickstarter's chief executive and co-founder, said the decision to join the benefit corporation movement began with a sojourn to the heart of Renaissance culture and finance in 2014.

never have a chance to develop because of a lack of funding. Yet the three co-founders also suspected the money to support them was out there. The missing link was the vehicle that would bring together would-be creators with large numbers of smaller patrons. Kickstarter supplied that bridge.

Kickstarter's model, as Mr. Chen describes it, is "micro-Medici." With the company's platform, a larger number of individuals can become patrons of new cultural initiatives by committing lesser amounts. These smaller sums, when aggregated, allow inventive artistic endeavors to be undertaken. Kickstarter found an alternative to the well-heeled patron.

By the time Mr. Chen visited Florence in 2014, the company was already successful. The year before, Kickstarter raised an average of \$1.3 million a day for a total of \$480 million, about a 50 percent increase over 2012. In 2013 Mr. Chen himself earned a spot on Time magazine's list of 100 most influential people. Before the trip to Florence the following year, Mr. Chen took a break from daily management of the firm as Mr. Strickler assumed the role of chief executive officer until Mr. Chen returned to the position in July 2017.

Taking a step back from day-to-day operations gave Mr. Chen the chance to re-examine the company's future. In the same city where Cosimo de' Medici envisioned art and contemplated the design of financial transactions, the man who first hatched the idea for Kickstarter typed out his thoughts on preserving the company's mission.

Mr. Chen would eventually share his reflections in an email to Mr. Strickler. The subject line read "existential kickstarter," and the message started a conversation about the company's future.

For Mr. Chen and his co-founders, the goal with Kickstarter was always to do more than perpetuate its existence, grow and fend off competition. They had sought to transcend a commercial environment in which the pursuit of profit could cause the company to depart from its original purpose of helping to bring creative projects to life. A fitting form of organization was needed to preserve the company's identity. Kickstarter found that structure in the form of the benefit corporation.

Putting Profit at the Service of Mission

Corporate mission statements have been in vogue for decades. Standard iterations allude to how the company's products or services improve lives, like Facebook's pledge

Kickstarter is one of a small but growing number of entities known as "benefit corporations" or "public benefit corporations," which are ushering in a new approach to business. In 2015 it renamed itself Kickstarter P.B.C., announcing that it was "obligated to consider the impact of [its] decisions on society, not only shareholders." For Kickstarter's chief executive and co-founder, Perry Chen, the decision to join the benefit corporation movement began with a sojourn to the heart of Renaissance culture and finance in 2014.

A New (Micro-) Medici

The setting could hardly have been more appropriate. In the shadow of Brunelleschi's Dome, in a city populated by the statues of Donatello and Michelangelo, near the frescoes of Fra Angelico and the panels of Botticelli, Mr. Chen sat in an Airbnb in Florence, Italy, contemplating Kickstarter's future.

Several of the monuments of Renaissance art that surrounded him were made possible by the patronage of Europe's first family of finance, the Medici. Mr. Chen's own interest in culture and the arts, combined with an innovative financial idea, is what led him to share his vision for the company with two other co-founders, Yancey Strickler and Charles Adler. Along with Mr. Chen, they recognized that many worthwhile creative projects



Socially minded entrepreneurs now have a substitute for the profit/nonprofit dichotomy.

to “give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together.”

But the absence of any mention of profit in corporate mission statements, according to Mr. Chen, obscures a basic fact. “In truth,” he explains, “the mission statement is the mix of a strategic and brand statement. The real mission is to make the most amount of money possible.... When there is a fork in the road, the framework dictates the choice toward profit.”

The “framework” is the product of both financial expectations and corporate law. Investors place funds in the hands of managers, who direct the operations of the firm with the hope of financial returns. Corporate law protects the investors’ financial interests by imposing duties on the managers. In practice, the demands of the market and the laws designed to protect investors have created an obligation for corporate managers to maximize wealth to the extent legally possible.

This narrow purpose of commercial enterprise was famously endorsed by the University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman in an article in *The New York Times Magazine* in 1970 titled “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits.” Mr. Friedman wrote, “there is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.” In other words, according to Mr. Friedman, businesses contribute to the common good only through the relentless pursuit of gain. All other interests, including those of the employees, customers, suppliers and the community in which the enterprises operate, are subordinate to the duty to maximize private wealth.

The principle of profit primacy does not mean that business organizations must always act toward immediate gain. Charitable contributions by commercial entities are defended as efforts to build good will and provide reputational enhancement, which will, in turn, contribute to business success. In other words, a company can provide charitable contributions and the like, provided its efforts to do so are driven by the profit motive.

The result is a binary corporate world of profit and nonprofit entities with distinct purposes. What is lacking in the binary construct is a business model that promotes the pursuit of profit not as an end but as a means toward some wider, nonfinancial goal.

The benefit corporation model was designed to address this deficiency. Beginning with Maryland in 2010, 33 states and the District of Columbia have adopted legislation allowing for the creation of private, for-profit entities that subordinate the pursuit of gain to the promotion of public or social welfare.

Kickstarter, for example, embeds the support of five social benefits in its corporate charter—art, charity, culture, education and environment—and specifies its commitment to each area as part of the way it pursues its mission. The particular practices listed in the charter include the requirement that the company support “green” commuting methods for its employees, factor in environmental impacts in selecting vendors and provide resources and recommendations to those raising funds on Kickstarter to make environmentally conscious decisions in areas like shipping and packing.

Among its socially conscious business practices, Kickstarter refuses to sell user data to third parties. It also declines to use “loopholes or other esoteric but legal tax management strategies” to reduce its tax burden. In an effort to promote diversity and pay equity, the charter requires the company to report on leadership demographics and comparisons of compensation between executive and nonexecutive employees. The company also pledges to provide paid time off for employees to use toward volunteering.

The charters of some benefit corporations link their profit and revenue generation to their mission. Kickstarter’s corporate charter, for example, commits the company to donate a portion of its after-tax profits to arts and music education. Another benefit corporation, the popular clothing manufacturer Patagonia, pledges to contribute 1 percent of its annual net revenue to nonprofits that promote environmental conservation and sustainability.

Mr. Chen contrasts this approach with philanthropy. He says his company’s practice is to seek partners in the nonprofit world that share the same mission, rather than merely selecting high-profile charities and adver-

tising support of them. Finding partners with a common purpose has a more lasting impact than giving to already successful charities.

While other corporations may engage in some of these socially minded activities on an ad hoc basis or even regularly, a benefit corporation law solidifies the role of social purpose and cements its place in the management of the organization. This kind of statute expands the legally defined fiduciary duties of a benefit corporation's managers and directors to require, rather than simply allow, the consideration of interests other than profit maximization.

There are currently more than 5,000 benefit corporations in the United States. In addition to Kickstarter and Patagonia, other popular benefit corporations include the baby food producer Plum Organics and the soap and cleaning products maker Method. Shares of another benefit corporation, Laureate Education, began trading on Nasdaq in 2017. Socially minded entrepreneurs and business owners now have a substitute for the profit/nonprofit dichotomy. "It gives us an alternative," says Mr. Chen.

A More Human Form of Business

In his 2009 encyclical "Caritas in Veritate," Benedict XVI called for a practical alternative to the profit/nonprofit division. Mr. Chen finds himself in agreement with Benedict when the latter writes that "the traditionally valid distinction between profit-based companies and nonprofit organizations can no longer do full justice to reality, or offer practical direction to the future" (No. 46).

Mr. Chen acknowledges that a narrow focus on profit-maximizing has an advantage in its simplicity. Decisions can be reached more easily when interested parties agree on a quantifiable goal. "Everyone can organize around the idea of making the most money," he says. "It is more complicated for a benefit corporation."

But Mr. Chen views the management of a benefit corporation as more closely resembling human life and the choices people must make. Individuals need to find ways to access material resources, but they also have wants and needs that they value more than money. Setting priorities and making selections based on those goals is "what we all do every day," Mr. Chen explains. By making the pursuit of profit an instrument for other objectives, the benefit corporation model attempts to "humanize" the commercial environment by establishing a framework that more closely resembles a fulfilling human life.

In *The Corporation*, a book that became a documentary of the same name, the Canadian law professor Joel Bakan

claims that individuals who adopt the value system of a for-profit corporation would generally be regarded as psychopaths by society. Borrowing from Mr. Bakan's remark, Mr. Chen says, "the classic corporation is a sociopath and the benefit corporation is a human."

The Beginning of a Corporate Renaissance?

Earlier this year Larry Fink, the chairman and chief executive officer of the multinational investment firm BlackRock, acknowledged in a letter to business leaders that "society is demanding that companies serve a social purpose." Mr. Fink elaborated by adding: "To prosper over time, every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society. Companies must benefit all of their stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers and the communities in which they operate."

Mr. Fink's letter attracted a great deal of attention. With more than \$6 trillion in assets under management, BlackRock is the world's largest money management firm. Mr. Chen says he was encouraged but not made enthusiastic by Mr. Fink's comments, which sounded to him like "wishful thinking." He points out that the emphasis of the message remained on companies prospering over time. Throughout the letter, financial performance is the point of reference and ultimate goal.

What is necessary, Mr. Chen explains, is an inversion of values. Instead of focusing on what companies need to do to succeed financially, chief executives and others should consider that businesses may need to shift their focus for the sake of human and social development. Without recasting the way business leaders like Mr. Fink frame success, Mr. Chen argues, any movement toward greater corporate social responsibility will ultimately be hollow. "We have to change what 'success' means," he says.

Mr. Chen draws an analogy between the business climate and current concerns about artificial intelligence. He highlights a fear among some that A.I. technology will quickly enable future machines to determine the most efficient ways of accomplishing various goals without considering all the factors humans value. The results could produce unanticipated catastrophes.

The structure of our business environment, Mr. Chen believes, is similar. He calls the mandate to make profit growth the consummate driving principle the "source code" of the business world. That code dictates certain results, and values that conflict too directly with profit maximization are subordinated or ignored. Outcomes that can

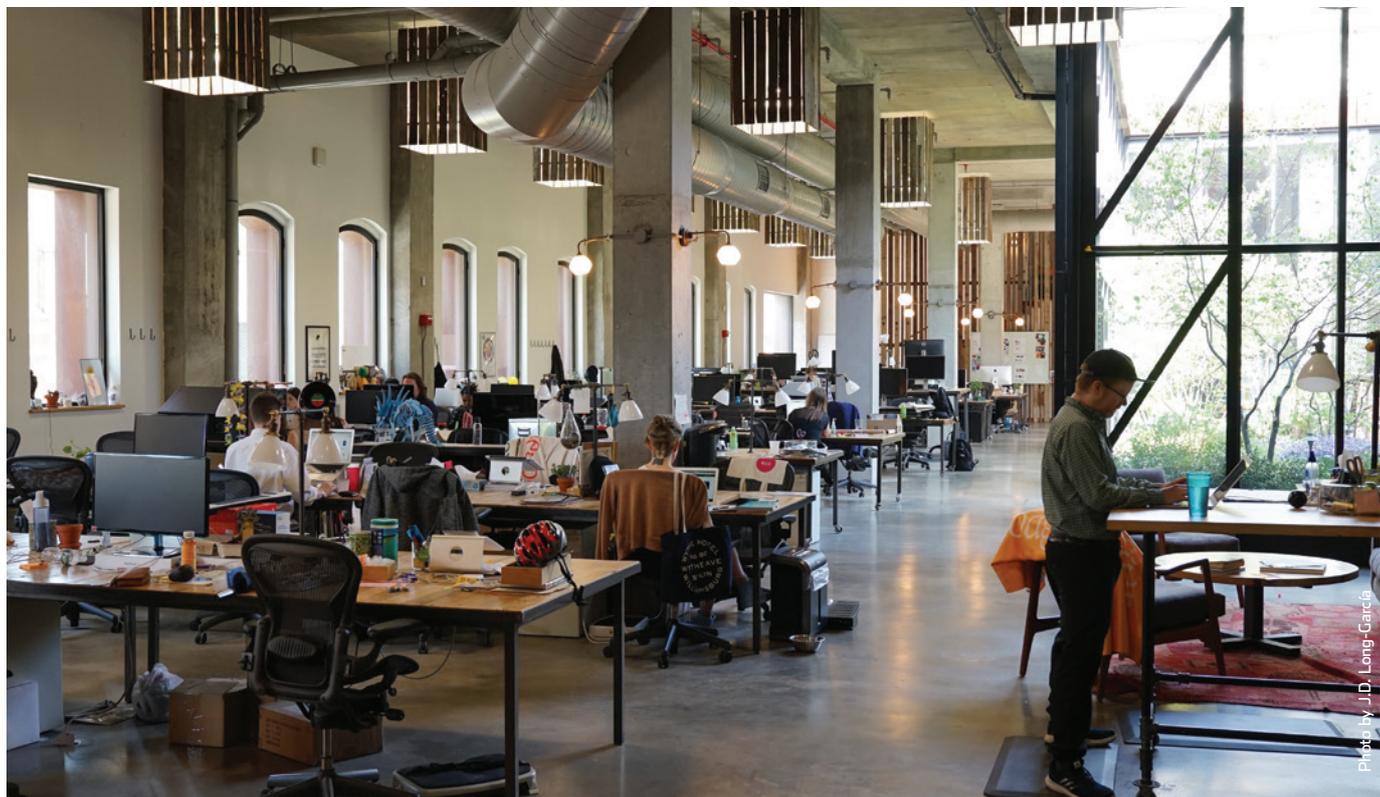


Photo by J.D. Long-Garcia

Kickstarter employees, some accompanied by a pet dog, work in an open workspace with lots of natural light.

be harmful to society, like job losses and environmental pollution, are practically necessitated by the framework in which decisions are made.

Mr. Chen argues that this framework has been in place so long that it has become all too easy for people to avoid examining their own culpability. “We poorly negotiate our complicity,” he says, “and our collective values are lowered as we make more and more compromises.”

Individual responsibility extends beyond operational management of a business firm. By Mr. Chen’s reckoning, entrepreneurs who sell their businesses do not shed their moral accountability. The seller of a business, especially sellers concerned about social impact, should consider the plans of potential buyers. Too many times, he says, the profit received upon the sale includes “a forward payment for exploitation.”

What society and those working in the for-profit world need most, according to Mr. Chen, is a more robust set of guiding principles, not just broad aspirational reflections from business leaders.

“My realistic hope is that there are alternative structures for the people who want those,” he says, and the benefit corporation is just one option. “The important thing is that it breaks out of that one sociopathic mandate,” Mr. Chen says, and it helps to prompt a conversation about the purpose of commerce.

For now, Mr. Chen is happy that Kickstarter is further-

ing that discussion. The co-founder is back in the C.E.O. position, leading new company initiatives like The Creative Independent, a site offering practical guidance for creative people, and Drip, a platform that channels support to creators on an ongoing basis.

The former factory where he once again directs daily operations is perhaps a symbol of Mr. Chen’s hope for Kickstarter’s mark on the business world. The decision to move from Manhattan’s Lower East Side to Greenpoint has contributed to an ongoing renaissance in the neighborhood, as shops and other businesses take up occupancy nearby. Rather than rent its space, the company strengthened its commitment to the neighborhood by purchasing the building. Kickstarter wants more than a place for an office. The company sent a signal that it wants its community to flourish along with it.

Mr. Chen has those same hopes for the business world and society in general. By both purchasing a building and adopting the benefit corporation model, Kickstarter aims to spark a renaissance in corners of the commercial world.

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THE COMMON GOOD AND THE MARKET

By Vincent J. Miller

Strong statements by Pope Francis in recent years have brought renewed attention to the church's teaching regarding the moral limits of markets. Yet recent essays in **America** by Arthur Brooks ("Confessions of a Catholic Convert to Capitalism," 2/6/2017) and Stephanie Slade ("A Libertarian Case for the Common Good," 8/6/2018) have argued for the church to more fully embrace potential contributions of market economies to the common good. This debate is necessary; however, both of these essays misunderstand the church's teaching regarding the relationship between markets and the common good.

To be fruitful, this debate must attend to three things: the specific definition of the common good in Catholic social doctrine, the particulars of the church's understanding of markets and the particular historical construction of the market in which we are currently living. Francis' teaching is in continuity with a long tradition of papal social doctrine that has wrestled with the power of markets for good and ill for more than a century. As markets continue to evolve, so must our moral reflection on them.

A CRITICAL PRINCIPLE

The common good is a fundamental principle of Catholic social thought. The term is as widely supported as it is





misunderstood. It is frequently equated with the average degree of economic flourishing among the individual members of society and is thus reduced to the assumption that economic growth is a sufficient measure of social well-being.

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, the official Vatican summary of church social teaching, distinguishes the common good from “the simple sum of the particular goods” of each member of society. The compendium notes that this good is “common, because it is indivisible and because only together is it possible to attain it” (No. 164). It is the specifically “social and community dimension of the moral good.” In the words of David Hollenbach, S.J., the common good “fulfills needs that individuals cannot fulfill on their own” and realizes “values that can only be attained in our life together.” It designates a certain kind of agency: working together for the good of the whole.

The Catholic understanding of the common good is indebted to Aristotle, who, the U.S. political scientist Thomas Smith observes, contrasted it with the competitive pursuit of goods like wealth, security and honor. The common good concerns the flourishing of the entire community, and it is something that increases rather than diminishes when shared.

This notion of a shared good of the entire community resonates with belief in God as a triune communion of persons. The “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” (“*Gaudium et Spes*”) of the Second Vatican Council roots the common good in Jesus’ prayer to the Father in John 17 that “all may be one...as we are one.” The council noted a “likeness” between the “union of divine persons” and the unity of humankind. This brings theological depth and specificity to the common good.

The political common good is of interest to the church because it is an incomplete but real fulfillment of the eschatological unity to which we are all called. The comparison with the unity of Jesus and the Father calls attention not simply to outcomes but also to the character of relationships. “*Gaudium et Spes*” states that humans “cannot fully find themselves except through the sincere gift of themselves” (No. 24). Finally, the council document challenges limited notions of the common good, expanding it beyond the local community or nation, making clear that we have rights and duties regarding the “whole human race.”

In its treatment of the role of the church in the contemporary world, the pastoral constitution considers and distinguishes economic and political aspects of society, which it discusses in separate chapters. As the theologian David Cloutier notes, each has its own associated good. The treat-

ment of economics focuses on the universal destination of goods, and the discussion of the political order centers on the common good. Here we find the oft-excerpted definition: “The common good embraces the sum of those conditions of social life whereby men and women, families and associations may more adequately and readily attain their own perfection” (No. 74).

Lifted from its context, there is always the danger of reading “conditions” here as if they are purely external situations in which we pursue individual flourishing. But the context in the document makes clear that the common good is the collective work of the community. Individuals, families and groups “are aware that they cannot achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts. They see the need for a wider community, within which each one makes his or her specific contribution every day toward an ever-broader realization of the common good” (No. 74). Awareness of this need drives the establishment of various forms of government or “political community” that exist “for the sake of the common good.” This expresses the ancient Catholic judgment that government is not a response to human sinfulness but an essential consequence of our social nature created by God.

Thus, Catholicism views the common good as a particular kind of good that concerns the whole of society. It corresponds with a particular form of agency: collective and political action. The common good is distinct from the economy but related to it, as both address different aspects of social life.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND THE MARKET

Catholic social teaching has been concerned with the market since its inception. Indeed, the rise of liberal economics was one of the “new things” to which Pope Leo XIII addressed his encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*” in 1891. This teaching has been refined in relationship to the changing face of capitalism over the years. A relatively stable core teaching on the relationship between markets and the common good is evident from Pius XI in 1931 through Pope Francis today.

St. John Paul II’s “*Centesimus Annus*” (1991) provides a concise summary of this core teaching. In the wake of the collapse of Soviet communism, the pope explicitly addressed the question of whether “capitalism” should now be considered the goal for developing nations. He offered a classic Catholic *sic et non*.

On the positive side, “If by ‘capitalism’ is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and

positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative.”

John Paul immediately balanced this affirmation. “But if by ‘capitalism’ is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative” (No. 42).

John Paul reflected on what markets can and cannot do. “It would appear...that the free market is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs. But this is true only for those needs which are ‘solvent,’ insofar as they are endowed with purchasing power, and for those resources which are ‘marketable,’ insofar as they are capable of obtaining a satisfactory price” (No. 34). While John Paul thought it best that people receive the training they needed to participate fully in economic life, he nevertheless held that “It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied” when they can find “no place on the market.”

Daniel K. Finn, a professor of theology and economics, notes that John Paul, with his discussion of the problem of a “satisfactory price,” is addressing the market failure of external costs. When the full environmental and social costs of production are not represented in the price, seemingly rational market activity leads to exploitation and environmental destruction. John Paul continued, warning of “a radical capitalistic ideology...which blindly entrusts the solution of [exploitation, marginalization and alienation] to the free development of market forces” (No. 42).

The Catholic Church accepts the good that markets can bring in strict economic terms (production and distribution) and in the specific sorts of freedom they can facilitate. But papal social teaching has consistently stressed that markets are limited and imperfect tools with potentially destructive aspects (inequality and exclusion, environmental degradation, erosion of community). For this reason, they are but one aspect of broader social flourishing, one that must be yoked to the common good through other modalities of human freedom—namely, politics. Thus, contrary to the argument of Arthur Brooks, capitalism is not fundamentally “content-neutral” or “amoral.” The market makes use of a powerful set of practices that can bring many benefits when oriented to the common good and profound disruption and suffering when it over-

runs its proper limits. It is precisely this tension that modern Catholic social teaching has responded to over the past century and a half.

WHICH CAPITALISM?

Those challenging the church’s critique of markets often urge that we look to the overall impact of capitalism. Arthur Brooks argues that the spread of free enterprise around the world has “pulled billions back from the brink of starvation” over the “last few hundred years.” But this timescale glosses over precisely the different relationships between the market and the common good with which Catholic social thought is concerned and that were fundamental to the positive effects of the market. The laissez-faire era that accompanied the Industrial Revolution brought enormous gains in production along with massive social upheavals and cyclical depressions, many of which were nearly as bad as the Great Depression of 1929-39. However, the Great Depression left the world in such disarray that free market liberalism, Soviet communism and fascism appeared equally politically plausible.

What emerged in the reconstruction after World War II in the West were various forms of democratic socialism guided by Keynesian management of markets. That era was marked both by a historically unprecedented period of sustained economic growth and by an equally unprecedented increase in equality. It was this social democratic era of capitalism, not the laissez-faire era that preceded it, that created the middle-class societies that we consider normal. Figures as diverse as Michael Novak and (then-Cardinal) Joseph Ratzinger have identified this form of capitalism as the implicit ideal of Catholic social doctrine. In an address to the Italian Senate, Cardinal Ratzinger said, “In many respects, democratic socialism was and is close to Catholic social doctrine and has in any case made a remarkable contribution to the formation of a social consciousness.” In this era, the market was oriented toward the common good through strong government regulation and very substantial tax-funded public investment. These positive outcomes were also driven by strong unions and a concord between business, labor and government to cooperate in the national common good.

In the late 1960s, postwar capitalism entered into a sustained crisis. The growth of these mass production economies depended on the demand provided by expanding national markets. Internal demand began to stagnate once large portions of the population already owned homes, large appliances and cars. The 1970s oil crisis pushed the

The common good is a fundamental principle of Catholic social thought. The term is as widely supported as it is misunderstood. ●●

U.S. economy further into stagnation.

Keynesian economics had no tools to address a simultaneous combination of high unemployment and high inflation. Into this crisis stepped neoliberal economists and allied foundations and institutes long opposed to the New Deal, who proposed that the answer was to abandon macroeconomic attempts to manage the economy and to allow microeconomic forces to steer the economy to efficiency and growth. The outcomes of this approach are abundantly clear: decades of low inflation, but also a fundamental disconnect between economic growth and equity. In the United States, inflation-adjusted income has stagnated for 90 percent of earners since 1978, and economic inequality has returned to the levels that preceded the Great Depression.

These market-focused ideas are no longer new. For five decades, neoliberal ideas have been the dominant inspiration for economic policy. Individualized, market-based structures have replaced the collective social insurance and public funding mechanisms of the New Deal. To take but one example: We have moved from state-subsidized universities and grants to individual student loans. This policy shift communicates to us that, yes, we are free to choose our own path (as we were in state-funded systems). But it also communicates the neoliberal belief of the policy shift's architect, the University of Chicago economist Gary Becker, that human capital is primarily an individual concern.

This neoliberal freedom comes with a literal price: We must choose a career that will enable us to pay back those loans. The common good may need more grade school teachers and rural doctors, but those positions will not pay off high loan balances.

Neoliberalism often presents itself as a project of deregulation. But as the economist Philip Mirowski of

Notre Dame observes, like any market system, neoliberalism is a massive exercise in policy construction. In a lecture in 1951, Milton Friedman proposed that what is “new” about neoliberalism is that it goes beyond the idea of *laissez-faire*. Rather than letting the market be, it seeks to promote competitive market action wherever possible.

But in “*Caritas in Veritate*,” Pope Benedict XVI offered a sobering catalogue of the world these new market-focused policies have created: “New forms of competition between states” have “led to a downsizing of social security systems as the price to be paid for seeking greater competitive advantage in the global market, with consequent grave danger for the rights of workers, for fundamental human rights and for the solidarity associated with the traditional forms of the social State” (No. 25).

MARKET EFFECTS BEYOND THE ECONOMY

The effects of neoliberalism extend beyond purely economic matters in two ways. First, market logic has heavily influenced the design of what we call social media and its impacts on our social lives and civil society. Second, living in this world of cultivated competition has a profound influence on how we experience relationships with others and, thus, how we understand ourselves and society.

Social media has become such an unavoidable part of social life that we easily forget how it differs from other forms of social relations. Unlike families, workplaces and local communities, social media platforms offer complete consumer freedom to choose with whom we associate. These media platforms have a market-like structure. Young people now grow up in a world where their social status is quantified before their eyes, where each thought or pose is immediately judged and evaluated in real time. Social media platforms construct a world where attention, friends and dating are experienced within a market framework. To a degree unimaginable to previous generations, our personal lives provide no refuge from market competition.

Milton Friedman proposed that Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” was relevant to any dimension of human life where large numbers of individuals pursue their own self-interest while interacting with others. But it is F. A. Hayek’s idea of the market as an information processor more powerful than democratic deliberation or expert synthesis that inspired the very algorithms that structure our social and civil lives. Indeed, one of the founders of Wikipedia, in an interview in *Reason* magazine, cited Hayek’s idea as his inspiration.

Social media has more or less absorbed contemporary civil society. Venerable institutions from previous eras—newspapers, journals of opinion and broadcast news networks—receive much of their traffic through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Reddit. These platforms create a marketplace of ideas where sourced journalism and considered opinion writing compete directly with shock news sites and conspiracy theories. Truth becomes an expression of subjective market preference, not an objective to be pursued collectively. Our division and incivility are not simply the result of moral weakness; they are the effects of these systemic market structures.

The market has an impact on broader society for a second reason: The more society is influenced by market logic, the more we experience ourselves as individuals in competition with others and the less we are able to imagine ourselves working with others in shared action for the common good.

Libertarians and other pro-market thinkers emphasize the social dimensions of market relationships. As Stephanie Slade argued in the pages of this magazine last August, capitalism “provides a framework for people to interact peacefully and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.” Commercial exchange elicits an “instinctive” thankfulness between parties. But labor abuse and monopoly behaviors are common enough to show this is far from a universal outcome. It is true that market exchange can elicit relationships that go beyond mere material benefit, but in contemporary market settings, these aspects of the relationship are always subordinate to the profit principle.

As an entrepreneur, I may develop deep personal connections to my suppliers and employees, but my entire enterprise is constrained by the need to make a profit. I can pay them at all only if I clear a profit, and thus I am forced to pay them as little as possible. We can propose alternative forms of market relations, such as the “Economy of Communion” movement highlighted by Benedict in “Caritas in Veritate,” but these do not describe the day-to-day working of the capitalism we currently have.

Neoliberals and libertarians often point beyond individual relationships to a broader “spontaneous order” that emerges from myriad interactions in the market. But whatever the projected harmony of this broader order, a fundamental component of the daily experience of relationship by members of market societies involves competition with others.

Meghan Clark, a theologian (and a former member of America Media’s board of directors), notes that one of Benedict’s central critiques of market relations in “Caritas in Veritate” concerns their anthropological impact, or how they form us in a way of being human that falls short of the fulness of communion to which humankind is called to share in the triune God. It is not that market societies do not promote relationships but that the kinds of relationships they encourage are constrained and limited, individual and competitive.

The political scientist Martijn Konings argues that there is a connection between the emotional burden of living in a neoliberal society and the more heartless aspects of contemporary politics. In a competitive market society, no one—rich or poor—is secure, and everyone is a potential competitor. People deal with the anxieties this produces by embracing the proffered vision that everyone gets what they deserve and deserves what they get. Every success is described as the result of personal virtue and hard work. This provides comfort that the abyss that threatens is not really random or capricious; rather, it is what happens to others who, unlike ourselves, lack discipline and initiative.

This vision exacerbates racial, ethnic and class divisions by ascribing the suffering of minority and underprivileged communities not to historic and present-day injustices but to deficient culture and poor choices. In this vision, safety nets are perceived as a moral hazard, a temptation to weakness. At Lampedusa, Pope Francis spoke movingly of the “globalization of indifference.” I have argued here that ours is a world made indifferent. Without a lived experience of the common good and access to the forms of action that achieve it, we become isolated, vulnerable and cruel.

Market economies have much to offer society when oriented toward the common good. For Catholic social thought, it is the task of politics to promote and set limits to the market so that it can serve the common good. This position can seem shocking in an era that has been dominated by neoliberal thought for five decades. But the postwar era of unprecedented market growth and equity took place when the market was allied with strong state support and oversight. Economic conditions change. We cannot simply reproduce that era, but we can seek to find a new balance in our changed circumstances. In order to get this balance right, we have to first recognize the distinct, political and collective nature of the common good.

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Vincent J. Miller, holder of the Gudorf Chair in Catholic Theology and Culture at the University of Dayton, is the author of *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture (Continuum)* and the editor of *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si’: Everything Is Connected (Bloomsbury)*.

Singing by the Exit Sign

*When the sky fell
on Holy Thursday*

By Mary Margaret Alvarado

I ran into my friends after they had done some coke and I had gone to Mass. I knew what they had been up to, and they had a hunch about me. But we loved each other, so, though I rejected the economy that brought cocaine into this country, and they rejected the rites that they associated (at best) with *Dracula* and dead great aunts, we just didn't talk about it.

This was in graduate school, in Iowa City, Iowa. Like many Mohammeds who go by Mo or like my Jewish student Chen who gave up and told us to pronounce his Hebrew name “Chin,” I did not then, nor do I now go by my ethnic ghetto of a name—Mary Margaret. Mia was what my friends called me and still do, just Mia.

In college I had read this quote from Thomas Merton: “What we have to be is what we are.” It was an epigraph to an essay written by an out, gay, noncelibate, politically leftist, devout, Catholic man, and I thought: *O.K. I will*. There is truth in all true paths; but life being brief and shopping being lame, I committed to walk the one I was born into.

Each December in my path, you get to light a wreath, put it on your head and deliver sweet rolls in the dark. And in the spring you are reminded that you are dust and will be dust. I had seen the Virgin of Guadalupe painted on the underside of lowriders and touched a basin of holy dirt. So: There was beauty. And though I had known all kinds of gay people in my church growing up, I had not heard a homily about, say, Sodom and Gomorrah. And then when I did encounter the church of the culture wars and the church of nationalism, I had already read an exegesis on Genesis 19 in the context of welcoming the stranger and had found some holy fools and a Trappistine hermit and the Catholic Worker, all of which afforded me room to stay.

So there I was, going to Mass all alone, a thing to keep on the down-low in my circle if ever there was. It was Holy Thursday. I left my raised-vaguely-Unitarian boyfriend at the falafel joint and walked to church in my flip-flops. I did so because though I had eaten, I remained hungry, and I did so because human beings washing each other’s feet is very beautiful to me; it is as beautiful a ritual as I know.

The priest was a Knights-of-Columbus kind of guy, pro-Tootsie Rolls and the patriarchy, but I had been taught that sometimes the homily is there for a smoke break (to paraphrase John Cheever). So fine: Give me Jesus. I longed to be washed and to wash. The sky was gathering and purple, full of tumult, really glorious and very near. I walked in.

I knew the washing of the feet as a peaceful, pluralistic chaos: People rose or didn’t and it took as long as it needed to and water got on the floor.

But not here. Father summoned 12 middle-aged white men in suits, and they sat in a line, facing us, like a weird barefoot press conference. No brown people, no poor or disabled people, no woman like the angel of my childhood parish who would occasionally yell “RONALD REAGAN

IS THE ANTI-CHRIST” while showering herself from the baptismal font with an old soap bottle just to keep things lively. It was just the insurance adjusters, God’s chosen.

Likely because of my own pride and attendant inability to see the full, various and beloved humanity of these men, this pissed me off. Or perhaps it pissed me off because it was bad ritual and, therefore, a kind of lie. So I walked out.

But outside there was a tornado—an actual tornado. Later that evening I would find that the roof of my apartment building had been ripped right off, which meant that on the second floor, where my friend April and I lived, there was no ceiling at all, just a mysterious gray sludge below and a streak of stars above.

My first impulse was to walk right into it, the weather and the sirens, but the trees were buckling, and I was soaked, so I turned back into the church, which had been transfigured. The lights were out. The row of men had disappeared. There was one light left: the exit sign. An enormous woman had planted herself under it. In my memory she only grows: She is six feet, 300 pounds now, a tree that will not be moved. This woman was no one official but, like any person around her, she had once been baptized priest, prophet and king. So there she was, under the EXIT sign, and she began to sing. She was singing “Pange Lingua, Gloriosi,” a Medieval Latin hymn, and she was singing it in such a way that if the tornado touched down, if the church building washed away, if the whole town or country was gone, just gone, she would have kept singing. *Sing my tongue*, the chant calls, so somber and beautiful. *Tell, my tongue, of the mystery*.

The shape of the church had changed. American-ness was erased. Somebody did a thing that Catholics excel at: They got a bunch of candles and passed them around. Why weren’t we in the basement? I don’t know. The sirens were going. For some reason, we lit candles instead, one to the next, and started to sing.

That woman is in so many parishes, right there beneath the exit sign and almost out the door, singing while the roof gets ripped off and the sky falls. I have a suggestion for the Fathers: Let the dark be dark. It already is. Just follow that woman; she knows the words. Or weep, while she sings.

Mary Margaret Alvarado’s recent nonfiction includes long-form essays on gun violence as *American weather* for *The Virginia Quarterly Review* and coming of age as coming into a digital existence for *Cagibi*. She is the author of *Hey Folly* (Dos Madres), a book of poems.



Why Jesus Movies Should be Strange

By Margaret Tucker

“Jesus of Nazareth” starred almost everybody who was anybody in 1970s cinema. The cast of Franco Zeffirelli’s mini-series reads like an honor roll of Hollywood legends. Laurence Olivier, Christopher Plummer, Anne Bancroft, Olivia Hussey, Peter Ustinov and James Earl Jones, among others, all took part in his ambitious adaptation of the life of Christ.

But despite its all-star cast, “Jesus of Nazareth” has not achieved the iconic status of the great biblical epics, like “The Ten Commandments” (1956)

and “Ben Hur” (1959). The issue, in part, seems to be style. One might say the series lacks it, lurching between melodrama and something that nearly approaches comedy. Scenes of Michael York’s John the Baptist volubly crying out in the desert cut away to shots of Plummer’s Herod cavorting with Herodias; Hussey’s ethereal Virgin Mary is followed on screen by Ustinov, droll as ever as Old Herod.

“As with any international casting roster, some performances can be both uneven and jarring,” observed

a 1977 New York Times review. “Just as one is settling into the substance of a scene, one sees Laurence Olivier lurking in some corner as Nicodemus, or Ralph Richardson as Simeon staggering dramatically into a synagogue.” It is a strange production that sometimes seems unsure of what it is and what it intends to be.

In 2017, the series was described once again as “uneven,” by the National Catholic Register’s Steven Greydanus. Though his overall take on it was positive, he noted that its “best



Alamy

Franco Zeffirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth" is as comfortable dealing in sincerity as it is wallowing in melodrama.

sequences...alternate with indifferent or middling material." He writes: "Key moments like Peter's great confession of Jesus and the Last Supper are reverentially staged, while other moments like the Parable of the Prodigal Son and Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin are dramatically reimagined—and not infrequently the latter are more interesting and valuable than the former."

And there is a disjunction between reverence and lively drama in "Jesus of Nazareth"—but that disjointedness should not necessarily be taken as a defect. Rather, I find that the absence of a unified style is the chief strength of "Jesus of Nazareth." After all, Jesus Christ became a man who lived at a specific moment in history—and history operates by different rules than art.

When it comes to historical accuracy in religious movies, it is difficult to top Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" (2004), which takes meticulous pains to capture the sounds and sights of life in first-century Palestine, down to the Aramaic spoken by Jesus and his contemporaries. While it never appears to be deliberately anachronistic, "Jesus of Nazareth" goes to no such trouble. The characters all speak English, many with British accents. The costumes—particularly the carefully crimped forelocks

worn by Joseph—seem a bit like, well, costumes. Hussey, as the Virgin Mary, never looks a day under 20, despite valiant attempts to age her, in later scenes, by streaking her hair with gray.

But "Jesus of Nazareth" is faithful to history in the very unevenness with which critics have taken issue. Theologians may debate about the degree to which history is scripted by God, but it seems clear that history—whether or not it has a script—has no single genre, mood or tone.

History is haphazard and wild, oscillating between tragedy and comedy. Historical actors do not always deliver their lines with the level of gravitas that a director might wish. There is no soundtrack, no special effects, no pause for applause.

"Jesus of Nazareth" is as comfortable dealing in sincerity as it is wallowing in melodrama. The most significant moments in the film, like the nativity and the passion, feel very true to the Gospels. The shepherds kneel to the newborn baby Jesus against a flourish of trumpets and timpani, for instance.

At other moments, a touch of mischief creeps in. Ustinov makes King Herod sound like an Oxford don, rolling his Rs and playing the dictionary like a piano. When one of Mary Magdalene's clients—clients!—asks her why she has not heard Jesus preach yet, her answer is blunt: "I sleep during the day, don't I?" In this case, the series picks up on the historically unlikely but popular idea that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. "This Jesus—he says it's not the righteous that need him, only the sinners," the client replies, cheerfully counting out coins into her hand. We begin to see

how readily this material can lend itself to the screwball treatment that it received in Monty Python's "Life of Brian" (1979). In a fitting twist, "Life of Brian" was shot on the sets of "Jesus of Nazareth" a few years later.

These shifts between high drama and something lower and earthy in "Jesus of Nazareth" bring home the fact that Jesus Christ was a man who entered into history and was surrounded by ordinary people. If some of the material in "Jesus of Nazareth" seems too coarse for the seriousness of its central character, all the better: Jesus lived in a coarse and unpredictable world.

Representing something like the incarnation in art, then, becomes no straightforward task. Anything that truly captures the mystery of God becoming human should be uncertain, unsettled and uneven. Such art may not seem "good" by conventional standards because it defies the categories that we typically use to evaluate it.

Instead, the story of Jesus requires a different kind of art, one that is looser and more responsive to the lives of real human beings. In *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953), Erich Auerbach says the literary tradition of realism was partially invented by the Jews in the Torah and carried on by the Christians in the New Testament. They created a sense of realism, he argues, by mixing "high" and "low" characters, subject matter, style and dialogue.

This amalgam of "high" and "low" contradicted ancient traditions in which "high" characters like gods, princes and heroes were treated in elevated forms, like epic poetry, while "low" characters like servants and

Anything that truly captures the mystery of God becoming human should be uncertain, unsettled and uneven. 🌊🌊

clowns were portrayed in comedies and burlesques.

The separation of styles, showcased by the likes of Homer, lingered into the Renaissance. Open any play by Shakespeare, and you will notice that the higher-born or noble characters tend to speak in poetic meter, while their servants—when speaking to each other—communicate in the lowlier form of prose.

The Gospels refuse to adhere to any separation of “high” and “low” forms and, in doing so, capture the messy and incongruous elements of history. Auerbach argues that this “mingling of styles” is embedded in Christian theology: It is “graphically and harshly dramatized through God’s incarnation in a human being of the humblest social station, through his existence on earth amid humble everyday people and conditions, and through his Passion which judged by earthly standards, was ignominious.”

Erich Auerbach was a German Jew. He wrote *Mimesis* in Turkey in the 1940s while living in exile from the Third Reich. For him, the incarnation was an interesting theory or literary development, not a fact. But if we take the incarnation as a fact, it becomes plain why the New Testament represents reality in a different way than Homer’s epics. Unlike a fable, the New Testament is actually representing reality. God, in becoming man, fused the high drama of “elevated” charac-

ters and the low comedy of servants and fools. In his very person and in the movement he created, the Lord blended poetry and prose.

It is this blend that “Jesus of Nazareth” does so well, especially with regard to the title character. Jesus is a difficult person to represent in film, especially if the film intends to follow the script laid out by the New Testament. As a character, he cannot undergo any real development because his character does not permit it—by his very nature he is perfect and unchangeable. The most interesting figures in films about Jesus tend to be not Jesus himself but disciples or other auxiliaries. Like “Ben Hur” (1956), “Risen” (2016) capitalizes on this tendency by inventing a new central hero and allowing Jesus to appear in a supporting role, skirting any obligation or temptation to develop the character of the Son of God.

Robert Powell’s performance of Jesus is, like the film, “uneven.” His iteration of Jesus spends half the film staring beatifically off into the distance and declaiming in a halting monotone and the other half animated by a sort of desperate energy, clearly only too aware of all that he must accomplish in so little time. He tells the parable of the prodigal son with zest; and his audience hangs on every word, listening like people who have never heard it before. He sees potential in Barabbas and tries to win him to his flock, and

we feel his disappointment when Barabbas refuses and storms away.

One of Powell’s most effective moments as Jesus occurs when he first encounters Judas Iscariot or, more accurately, when Judas, aglow with revolutionary idealism, offers himself to Jesus as a “scholar who wishes to serve you.” This is one of the moments when Powell’s immobility really works; he sits leaning against a wall, head thrown back, eyes closed. But when Judas finishes his speech, he suddenly bows his head and covers his face with his hands, as if burdened by something painful that he alone can know. We recognize, eerily, that this man can see the future. We glimpse the divine in this simple, human gesture.

Powell’s Jesus moves lightly through a world that does not fully understand who he is. The series allows its viewers to share in this mysterious collaboration between the divine and the everyday—Auerbach’s “mingling of styles”—by allowing them to experience what it might have been like to witness the events of the Gospels in real time. Most films about Jesus are pitched to believers, withholding nothing from the audience—perhaps because there would be no point in doing so. The Annunciation sequence in “The Nativity Story” (2006), for instance, stages the full dialogue between Mary and Gabriel and ends with a swell of ethereal music that acts almost like a nod. *You know what this*

means, it says. *You know the significance of this, and how everything will play out.*

In “Jesus of Nazareth,” the Annunciation is shot from the point of view of Mary’s mother, who watches her daughter cowering on the floor and making her “fiat” to a ray of light shining in through the window. We do not see the angel. Instead, we see Mary seeing the angel and must have faith that she truly sees whom she is speaking to.

The question of spectatorship comes into play most profoundly in the scene where Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. The camera pans out as Lazarus advances from his tomb swathed in bandages. In panning out, it allows us to see the large crowd of onlookers that has gathered to witness this marvel. It also suddenly allows us to see the action from their vantage point. Lazarus becomes a mummy, an animate corpse defying the order of nature. We realize how frightening, and even horrific, this miracle might have looked to those who originally witnessed it, without having had their interpretation of the event shaped by centuries of exegesis and art.

The oddities of “Jesus of Nazareth,” then, should not be dismissed as defects. They capture the sheer strangeness and mystery of the Incarnation in a way that more polished films about Jesus fail to do. “What we see here is a world which on the one hand is entirely real, average, identifiable as to place, time and circumstances,” writes Auerbach, in describing the intrusion of Jesus Christ into history, “but which on the other hand is shaken in its very foundations, is transforming and renewing itself before our eyes.”

“Jesus of Nazareth” attends equally to both the reality and the transformation.

Margaret Tucker is a writer living in St. Louis.

As I Lie Dying

By James S. Torrens

As I lie dying (or some rehearsal thereof), I request a touch of the oils from a stand-in for the arisen healer who brooks no delay of mercy.

More than a thumbprint! A smear of blessing on forehead and palms. Let it sink in. May it awaken my body guards to their charge of rebuffing the cells in rampage.

Send in your proxy, Jesus, to lay hands on this scarred and balding head, the way you patted the curls of children when your aides could not be bothered.

As my kin hover about me, Anointer, who patted the curls of children, have your proxy lay hands on this furrowed head. My waters if troubled, soothe.

James S. Torrens, S.J., is a former poetry editor of *America*.

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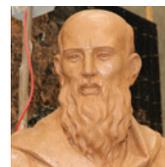
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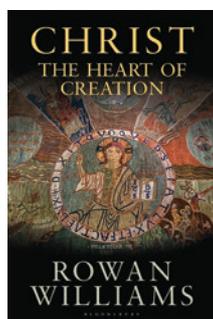
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A mosaic in the Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, Istanbul (iStock)

The heart of the matter

By Robert P. Imbelli



Christ
The Heart of Creation
By Rowan Williams
Bloomsbury Continuum
304p. \$42.99

Shortly before Christmas this past year, I came upon a column by the well-known Washington Post and Commonweal commentator E. J. Dionne. In it Dionne penned a sensitive appeal to fellow churchgoers to “cut the ‘Chreasters’ some slack.”

He was referring to those who attend church only occasionally, in particular on Christmas and Easter. He suggested that though some may be motivated by nostalgia for Christmases past, the presence of large numbers at Christmas and Easter Masses may manifest an “enduring hunger for the experience of the sacred.” Dionne wondered whether the “Chreasters,”

reacting against “a society defined solely by self-interest and calculation, by the visible, the measurable, and the tangible,” might “have an intimation that the world is made up, in the words of the Nicene Creed, of both the ‘seen and unseen.’”

Though I found Dionne’s insights perceptive, I could not help thinking that he had left the “Chreasters” only at the threshold of the mystery that Christmas and Easter celebrate. Rather than a vague and amorphous transcendence, Christmas and Easter celebrate a revelation that is “Christomorphic”: formed and founded in Jesus Christ.

My concern at what was missing in the column came into sharper focus through a book I had been reading during the Advent season: Rowan Williams’s *Christ: the Heart of Creation*. Williams, the Anglican former archbishop of Canterbury, is one of the premier contemporary Christian theologians in the world today, and I consider this book one of the most significant theological works to appear in recent years.

Williams writes with splendid

clarity and exemplary intellectual generosity. But it is the significance of his subject and the depth of his analysis and discussion that make the book especially timely and essential. For Christian faith stands or falls upon the scandalous proclamation of the incarnation of God’s eternal Word in the mortal humanity of Jesus of Nazareth.

Williams traces the spiritual and intellectual pondering of the mystery of the Incarnation in such crucial figures as Aquinas and Scotus, Luther and Calvin, Barth and Bonhoeffer. And, significantly, he gives careful and merited attention to the 20th-century Jesuit philosopher and theologian (whose importance is being newly rediscovered) Erich Przywara.

In *Christ: the Heart of Creation*, Williams undertakes a careful exercise in Christological “grammar,” clarifying the rules for the appropriate use of language about Christ. Do we speak in our homilies and sing in our hymns of one who was but God in human disguise, exempt from the struggles and sufferings

to which flesh is heir—the hoary specter of “monophysitism”? Or, conversely, do we chant the praises of the superstar who graduated with a degree in divinity—the easy option of “adoptionism?”

Orthodox faith in Christ, and its “grammar” that was refined in the fire of prayer and commitment over centuries, is no facile compromise between these cheap alternatives, but the revolutionary breakthrough into a new understanding of both God and humanity.

“The finite reality of Jesus embodies infinite divine relatedness, and so its own humanly and historically generated relations are more than instances of routine finite relations,” Williams notes. “They have the effect of extending and deepening human relations with God, so that the ‘filiation’ that characterizes Jesus is in some measure lived out in believers.”

Let me unfold some of what his densely luminous language implies.

First, of course, it recognizes that the infinite God and finite creatures are “incommensurable.” God is “totally other,” not merely the human inflated to superhuman proportions. There is no competition between God and humanity—no diminishing of one by the proximity of the other. They are not jostling for the same ontological space.

Absent robust belief in the Incarnation (our sole access to God’s Triune reality), Christianity inevitably evaporates into unitarianism and ethical culture. If the Triune God’s first gift is creation itself, the second, far surpassing the first, is the fully personal gift of the eternal Word made mortal flesh, even unto death and new life.

A second implication of faith in God incarnate, then, is that God’s gift

of divine “filiation,” fully actual in Jesus, becomes, through Jesus, the supernatural calling and dignity of the believer. Williams writes: “The central themes of classical Christology are closely bound up with the doctrine of Christ’s Headship; that is, to acknowledge the divine life of the Word at work in Jesus is the foundation for thinking of the community of believers as bound together with him in a relation that is unlike any other.” Williams continues: “The Word lives in and through those affiliated with Jesus, and, as a result, their lives are also linked to one another in a way that is not simply that of individual to individual, but in a comprehensive pattern of interdependence—the common life of the Body as Paul describes it.”

A third dimension of Incarnational faith emits the conviction that the flesh-taking of the eternal Word cannot be limited to the concrete reality of the church but must overflow into concern for and commitment to the true life of the world. Here Williams draws upon the thought and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the pastor and theologian executed by the Nazis in the closing days of World War II.

Rather than an easy reduction of Jesus to the role of moral teacher or the object of sentimental piety, Bonhoeffer’s theology is radically Christ-centered. As both Bonhoeffer and Williams insist: “The Christological transformation of humanity is the transformation of all our constitutive relationships.” Who but the very Word incarnate would dare exclaim: “The one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.... the one who does not take up his or her cross and follow me is not worthy

of me” (Mt 10:37-38)?

Thus the “grammar” that governs the language of classical Christology, which Williams explores with such depth and sensitivity, exhibits a distinctive “logic”: the logic of “*novum* and transformation.” The utter newness of Jesus Christ requires not a merely notional acknowledgement but a real and ongoing transformation in its recipients.

Christians hear and are witness not to a dim rumor of angels but to the clarion call of the good news of God’s presence in our midst in the person of Jesus the Christ. What makes that appropriation so challenging, so excruciating is that it is never accomplished save by passing through the narrow way that is Christ’s cross.

“This divine act [of Incarnation] is recognizable not because it ‘resembles’ any divinity of our imagination, but because it creates a new people in a renewed world,” writes Williams in his summary of incarnational faith. “It shows itself divine by utterly refusing what we might be tempted to regard as signs of divinity; by enacting itself ultimately in the emptying of power, the humiliation and the immobilization of the cross.”

The resurrection, Williams notes, “is not a triumphant instance and epiphany of divine power so much as the bare fact of the impossibility of defeating and extinguishing the divine presence in Jesus: *As the incarnate and crucified, he lives.*”

The Rev. Robert P. Imbelli, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, is the author of *Rekindling the Christic Imagination: Theological Meditations for the New Evangelization.*



Becoming
By Michelle Obama
Crown Publishing
426p \$32.50

A first lady takes stock

How a nation interprets a first lady says as much about us as it does about her. In *Becoming*, Michelle Robinson Obama joins several other former first ladies who have penned reflections on the office of spouse-in-chief. She narrates her own story as an African-American girl growing up on Chicago's South Side who headed off to Princeton (where she voluntarily took a theology class in her first year) and later Harvard Law School. As a successful lawyer and hospital administrator and as a wife and mother who has moved out of the White House, she takes stock of what has come before.

What distinguishes this book is Obama's nuanced awareness of how public perception of her is inextricable from ongoing struggles within American understandings of race, professional women and the political process. "When you're First Lady," she says, "America shows itself to you in extremes.... Since stepping reluctantly into public life, I've been held up as the most powerful woman in the world and taken down as an 'angry black woman.' I've wanted to ask my detractors which part of that phrase matters to them the most—is it

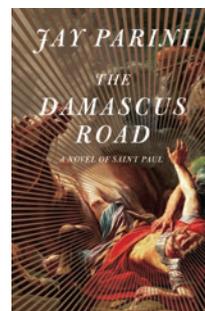
'angry' or 'black' or 'woman'?"

The former first lady's self-presentation in this book is warm, smart and unafraid. She manages to balance serious talk with a sense of humor. She names ongoing challenges to our nation: "The deeper I got into the experience of being First Lady, the more emboldened I felt to speak honestly and directly about what it meant to be marginalized by race and gender."

Reflecting on Donald Trump's rhetoric (specifically the 2005 tape that objectified women at the hands of powerful, rich men), she writes: "Every woman I know recognized it.... Women endure lifetimes of these indignities—in the form of cat-calls, groping, assault, oppression. These things injure us. They sap our strength. Some of the cuts are so small they're barely visible. Others are huge and gaping."

Michelle Obama's moral compass is oriented around integrity and focused on creating a more equitable world for children, with special attention to girls and young women in the United States and around the world, regardless of color or creed. "We owe it to them to stay strong and keep working to create a more fair and humane world," she writes. *Becoming* is a powerful demonstration of what a strong woman can make of a "reluctantly" public life.

Christiana Zenner is an associate professor of theology, science and ethics at Fordham University in New York.



The Damascus Road
A Novel of Saint Paul
By Jay Parini
Doubleday
368p \$27.95

The messenger

"No sooner had Jesus knocked over the dragon of superstition," wrote George Bernard Shaw in "Androcles and the Lion," "than Paul boldly set it on its legs again in the name of Jesus." Shaw's line captures the outsize and frankly uneasy influence that St. Paul had on the early church. Though the apostle's letters comprise almost a third of the New Testament, he remains controversial. Progressives in particular often hold Paul responsible for corrupting Jesus' teachings and introducing starchy moral standards into the faith.

Jay Parini's *The Damascus Road*, a new novel about the life of Paul, shows how early Christianity as a movement may have developed. Parini, a poet, critic and professor of English and creative writing at Middlebury College, chooses as his narrators both Paul and Luke—Paul's colleague (and often rival) in the early efforts to articulate and promote the tenets of the new faith.

Though the Paul chapters are often exciting—campaigns and conversions and narrow escapes from death—the chapters narrated by Luke are rather more absorbing, perhaps because Luke is much

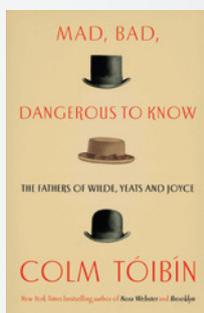
more relatable. (Upon hearing Paul suggest that Christians should put forward their bodies as living sacrifices to God, Luke quips, “This is going to be difficult in practice.” Indeed.)

Devout and dedicated to Paul, Luke comes across as someone with normal anxieties and struggles. “I, as a physician, sought explanations,” Parini’s Luke explains. “I must take into account causes and effects. I didn’t often speak in metaphors or parables, preferring the plain sense of things. Nor did I traffic in abstruse thoughts.” Paul, however, is a zealot who speaks in allegories and embellishes stories in order to build a church (or really more a movement) devoted to Jesus.

Parini argues that Paul did this by marrying Jewish theology to classical philosophy to forge a belief system that felt simultaneously novel and familiar. Parini writes that he became interested in the idea when he noticed similarities between Paul and Plato. In *The Republic*, for example, Plato writes that those who contemplate existences merely by thought, and not their effects, see them only “through a glass, darkly.” In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul writes of knowledge that “for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.”

Parini shows that in presenting Christianity to the Gentiles in terms they could understand, Paul helped a Roman world of the first century that was largely unfamiliar with the Hebrew Old Testament to embrace Christian theology—if not necessarily its primary messenger.

Daniel Luzer is an editor at Oxford University Press.



**Mad, Bad,
Dangerous to Know**
The Fathers of Wilde,
Yeats and Joyce
By Colm Tóibín
Scribner
272p \$26

Dear old dads

In *Mad, Bad, Dangerous to Know*, Colm Tóibín digs into the history and literary footprints of the fathers of Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats and James Joyce. The book is part walking tour, part historical narrative and part exercise in close reading. By the end of it, Tóibín may have you reaching for your abandoned copy of *The Importance of Being Earnest* or *Dubliners*, even if you have not touched those books since high school.

Tóibín tells the stories of these three fathers as an investigator—though one who is neither accusatory nor forgiving. The book is full of tidbits from letters between family, friends and lovers. Tóibín’s knowledge of the literary texts he analyzes and his ability to converse with them make the book successful.

In the first section, Tóibín tackles the messy legacy of Oscar Wilde’s father, William Wilde. A doctor famous for developing eye and ear care, William Wilde also explored and documented the Aran Islands. He had several illegitimate children and a famous feud with Mary Travers, who accused William Wilde of violating her while she was unconscious.

Tóibín tells all of this, connecting it to the time he spent a day voluntarily locked in Reading Gaol

in the cell where Oscar Wilde was jailed for “gross indecency” (suspected sexual interactions with men). Tóibín skilfully connects the attempts of both William and Oscar Wilde to save themselves by writing, and the fact that Tóibín read Wilde’s work in Wilde’s former cell lends intimacy to the analysis.

Tóibín writes about his visit to Union College in Schenectady, N.Y., to see its collection of Yeats materials and his time with Michael Yeats, the son of W. B. Yeats. Tóibín uses these experiences to draw the reader into the life of W. B. Yeats’s father, John, with his failed attempts as a portraitist and his romantic love letters.

The final segment of the book, about James Joyce and his father, John Stanislaus Joyce, is where Tóibín’s talents as a literary critic show most clearly. Tóibín weaves excerpts from *Stephen Hero*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* with his own analysis and history to show how James Joyce’s view (and portrayal) of his father shifted in his writing. Tóibín brings new insight and interest to these often studied Irish classics.

Emma Winters, *Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., fellow.*
Twitter: @emwinters1.



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Once a slave, on the path to sainthood

By Brandon Sanchez

Rejected by U.S. seminaries because he was black, Father Tolton, played here by Jim Coleman, studied theology in Rome.

Two years ago, the actor Jim Coleman had never heard of the Rev. Augustus Tolton, who is believed to be the first African-American Catholic ordained a priest. Now he portrays him in a production, “Tolton: From Slave to Priest,” which is currently touring the United States.

Based on the book *From Slave to Priest: The Inspirational Story of Father Augustine Tolton*, by Caroline Hemesath, S.S.F., the play is an account of Father Tolton’s remarkable life. After escaping from slavery with his mother and siblings, the young Tolton was raised in Illinois in the Catholic faith. Rejected by U.S. seminaries because he was black, Father Tolton repaired to Rome, where he studied for the priesthood. After his ordination in 1864, “he wants to go to Africa where he wants to be a missionary, but he’s sent back to the ‘enlight-

ened’ country of America,” said Leonardo Defilippis, the founder of Saint Luke Productions, which produced the play. Father Tolton returned to the United States, where eventually he started St. Monica Parish on Chicago’s South Side, ministering to African-American and white parishioners.

Mr. Defilippis first learned about Father Tolton while visiting the Diocese of Springfield, Ill. “A pastor gave me a book on [Tolton] and said, ‘Could you do a show?’ That’s what we do at Saint Luke Productions. We’ve done that for 38 years.”

Mr. Defilippis started Saint Luke Productions in 1980 to stage a production about the Gospel of Luke. Since then, he and his wife, Patti Defilippis, have staged a dozen other plays. The company worked on “Tolton” for two years before it opened at Chicago’s DuSable Museum of African Ameri-

can History in November 2017.

“How do you take someone’s life and put it in an hour and a half?” said Mr. Defilippis. He contacted Cardinal Francis George, who introduced him to Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Perry, the postulator of Father Tolton’s cause for sainthood, with whom Mr. Defilippis and his wife wrote the script. They consolidated canonization documents and historical documents, even reaching out to descendants of the Elliotts, the white family that had owned Father Tolton when he was a slave.

Upon joining the production, Mr. Coleman read the book about Father Tolton’s life and was able to read some of his letters. As he has traveled, audience members and hosts have regaled him with stories about Father Tolton. In early February, in Belleville, Ill., he learned about a connection between Tolton and the first bishop of Belleville,

John Janssen. “When he became bishop of Belleville, Father Tolton was his cross bearer—at the church where we performed.... I was honored to be able to do a show at that cathedral where Father Tolton had actually been,” Mr. Coleman said.

Mr. Coleman is astounded by the response the show elicits from the audience. “We were in Daytona Beach,” he said, “and a woman came to me—she was crying—and said that during the scene where Father Tolton died and spoke to his mother, she saw her son who had died. After that, then I’m in tears because I’m just like, ‘That is amazing.’”

A short film about Father Tolton, written and directed by the Nashville filmmaker Chris Foley, premiered this year. It follows Father Tolton’s escape from slavery with his mother, Martha, and three siblings.

“Father Tolton is an incredible tipping point,” said Mr. Defilippis. “As a native son of America, his story is so triumphant in the sense of what he was eventually able to do,” responding to persecution and oppression with an outpouring of love.

Mr. Defilippis noted that while there is no mention of Father Tolton at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, “now people are getting to know his story, and they’re actually starting to find out he’s one of the most significant black figures in the history of the United States and one of the most significant priests.”

Brandon Sanchez, *Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., fellow.*
Twitter: @offbrandsanchez.

The Russian dolls of the Roman Catholic Church

One of the things I love about pop culture is the way it can take the confusing realities of our human experience and give us a way, through story and character, of considering those realities from the outside. And as though custom made for the situation of our church, Netflix launched the new show “Russian Doll” in February with a familiar conceit: On the night of her 36th birthday, the New Yorker Nadia Vulvokov (Natasha Lyonne) gets hit by a cab. But instead of dying she finds herself back at her birthday party, none the worse for wear. And no matter what she does, the same things keep happening: She makes some error, she dies, she returns to the party.

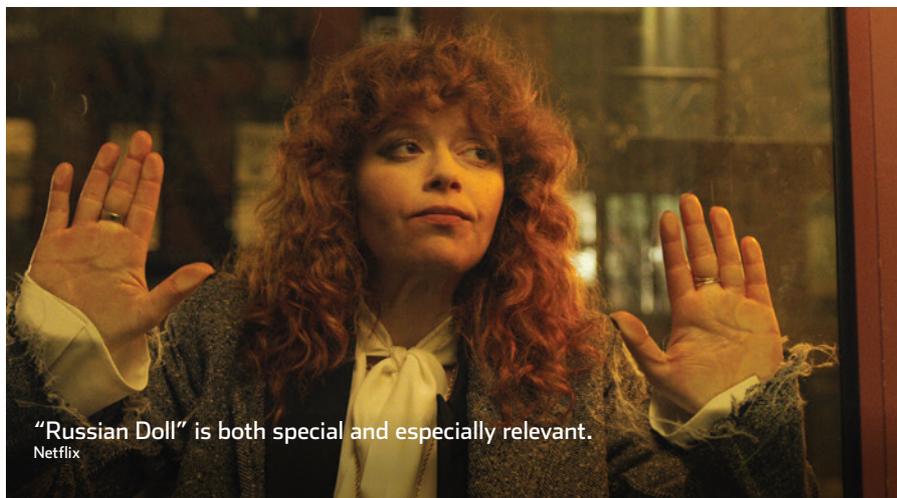
What makes “Russian Doll” both special and especially relevant is the extent to which Nadia’s time-travel-obstacle-course quest for freedom in the present is married to the much more difficult pursuit of psychological freedom from her past. It is no coincidence that Nadia keeps returning to her 36th birthday party, as that is the moment she passed the age at which her mentally ill mother had died. The crucible of her childhood years formed Nadia’s way of thinking about the world, gave her the sense that life is random and meaningless and that eventually we

will be abandoned by everything, even our pets, and die violently and alone.

Where “Groundhog Day” insists Bill Murray needs to just get over himself, “Russian Doll” confronts the general impossibility of overcoming these beliefs and coping strategies woven into the fabric of our being. You cannot simply “change.” Instead, the show suggests, the best you can do is befriend that scared and angry child still within you and be the gentle, understanding parent you never had. That act of self-understanding and compassion enables you to look up from yourself and see the world around you as it is, filled with others trapped just like you.

I wonder if the insights of “Russian Doll” do not apply to our church. Self-preservation and clericalism seem almost impossible to thwart directly. Many have tried. Perhaps the path to meaningful, lasting conversion is for our leaders to sit with the truth not just of their mistakes but of the deeper, desperate, human fears that lie beneath and eventually to look up to see in the people of God not subjects, obstacles or scapegoats but friendship and help.

Jim McDermott, *S.J., contributing writer.*
Twitter: @PopCulturPriest.



“Russian Doll” is both special and especially relevant.
Netflix

Come Back To Me

Readings: Is 43:16-21, Ps 126, Phil 3:8-14, Jn 8:1-11

This Sunday's Gospel passage is about conversion. This is important to note at the outset, because this narrative can easily admit other interpretations. Contrary to the interpretations of many, for example, Jesus does not reject the law of Moses in the narrative or issue an implicit condemnation of all of Judaism. What he rejects is the use of biblical law as an excuse for mob action. All are sinners, and many feel guilt for their actions, but some try to expunge their guilt by mob punishment of a defenseless scapegoat. Although these "blood purges" are documented throughout human culture, they violate the spirit of the law of Moses, which valued repentance over punishment. Using the law as an excuse for some kind of frenzied vicarious retribution was in fact a violation of God's intent.

It is also important not to sentimentalize Jesus' actions. It is beyond question that he values the woman's life. In fact, he holds her single life to be more important than centuries of zealous application of the law. But he never questions the charges brought against her, and he does nothing to ascertain the validity of the accusers' facts. He does not try to understand things from her perspective or find mitigating factors. Once he saves her life, he sends her off with clear instructions: "Go, and from now on do not sin any more." He does not condemn her, but he does not call her previous actions good, either. He saves her life not because he accepts her behavior, but because he wants to give her the chance to change.

Jesus' faith in the crowd usually goes unremarked upon, but he places considerable trust in their goodness. A single person with poor hearing or distracted attention would have undermined his lesson completely. If one self-righteous zealot had dismissed Jesus as a softhearted fool and taken matters into his own hands, the blood frenzy would have proceeded without further interruption. Jesus trusts the crowd to recognize the deeper intent of the law and to exercise self-restraint. That they do this implies that they, like Jesus, recognize conversion, not punishment, to be the true goal of biblical law.

'Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.' (Jn 8:11)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Do you treat God's law as a tool for conversion or retribution?

How has Jesus challenged you to recognize the deeper meaning of God's commands?

Have you ever felt Jesus place his trust in you? How has that transformed your behavior?

The woman's conversion is less easy to recognize. She does not dispute the charges against her or try to exculpate herself, and she never questions her need for the forgiveness Jesus offers. Her silence suggests that she accepted Jesus' command to change her life. If John gives dramatic illustration to the crowd's conversion with their quiet dispersal, he leaves the woman's entirely to the reader's imagination.

The crowd and the woman each had to acknowledge how far their actions had drifted from God's intent. As our own Lenten journey enters its final weeks, it is perhaps time for us to consider the same for our lives. It is easy to ignore God's commands or to use them to mark boundaries or punish enemies. It is considerably harder to use them for the conversion of sinners. As Christ's disciples, we must continue the example he sets in this Gospel passage. By eschewing retribution we can give even hardened hearts the chance they need to return and sin no more.

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

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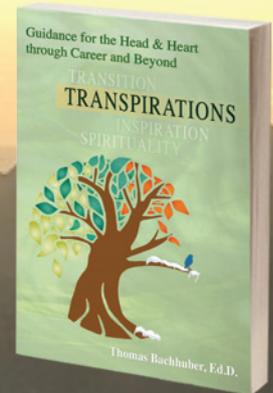
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True to the End

Readings: Lk 19:28-40, Is 50:4-7, Ps 22, Phil 2:6-11, Lk 22:14-23:56

Death seizes everything. Every person we know will die. Everything we treasure will slip away from us, pass through the hands of others and eventually return to dust. Every human act, good or evil, will eventually be lost to memory, and although consequences can linger long after doers and deeds are forgotten, even these finally play themselves out. Nothing can withstand the corrosion of entropy.

The salvation Jesus offers is a life that allows something to survive the threat of annihilation. Jesus' great insight was that death could not capture anything already in God's hands. His teaching and example show us how to place every aspect of our lives under God's authority. Only what we freely give back to God will be able to elude the grasp of death.

Total obedience to God does not come naturally to most people, as Luke starkly illustrates in his account of Jesus' passion and death. Divided hearts and loyalties are everywhere in Luke's narrative. Only Jesus maintains control of his will until the end, remaining firm in his obedience to God and trust in the Father's promise.

One clear fault line that Luke emphasizes lies between

the people and their leaders. The chief priests and elders insist uniformly on Jesus' crucifixion, while the people are of two minds. Some side with their leaders (Lk 23:14), while others express their support for Jesus (Lk 23:27). Similarly, Peter symbolizes the psychological divisions of the apostles. Their words show them eager to support Jesus (Lk 22:33, 38), but their actions reveal their faintness of heart (Lk 22:54-62). The two criminals, traditionally called Gestas and Dismas, likewise represent division. The one thief, Gestas, derides Jesus and represents those who rejected his teaching. By contrast, the good thief, Dismas, expresses his faith even as he witnesses Jesus' death on the cross. These divisions are just a few that illustrate the confusion and conspiracy surrounding Jesus' death.

By contrast, Jesus remains singlehearted until the end. His constancy makes his self-control apparent. He has conformed his will completely to God's, and he would rather die than betray this commitment. In Gethsemane, for example, he shows himself the master of all assembled. He neither attacks nor flees from his pursuers, and he forbids his followers to resist them. He even takes the time to heal the severed ear of the high priest's slave. Likewise, on the cross Jesus never questions his commitment. Instead of the desperate recitation of Ps 22 recorded in Matthew and Mark ("My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"), Jesus tells Dismas, "Today you will be with me in paradise." This one sentence testifies to Jesus' resolute heart and complete self-mastery even as death had arrived to seize him.

How hard it is to let go of what we love, and how easy it is to despair. All things come undone, and our best reasoning tells us they are gone forever. We must never forget that if we conform our lives to the Gospel, we place into God's hands the dust to which our lives will return. Like Christ, we too can trust that our creative God will fashion it into something new.

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

'Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' (Lk 23:43)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

To what people, place, things or ideas do you cling?

Are there divisions in your heart?

How can you emulate Jesus' unwavering obedience to God?

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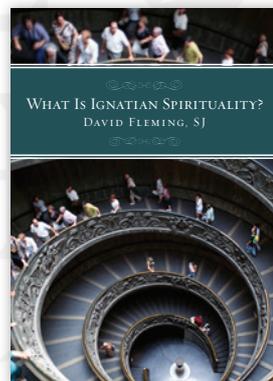
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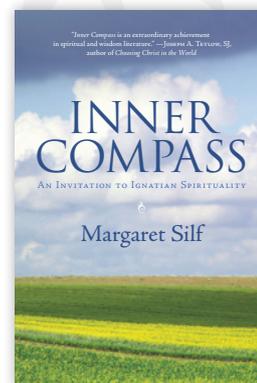
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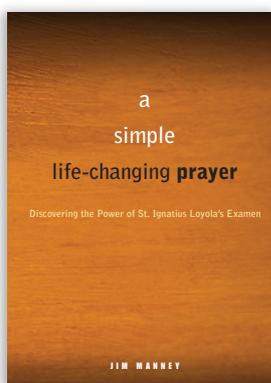
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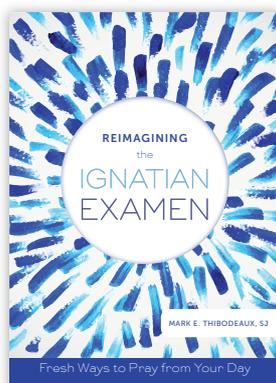
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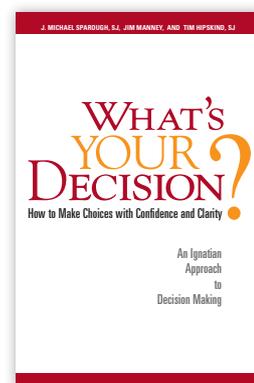
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Carry Your Cross

We should not be afraid to meditate on death

By Theresa Aletheia Noble



I have a skull on my desk. The small ceramic skull is my *memento mori*, a reminder of my inevitable death. When I acquired the skull, I had only a vague understanding of the history of meditating on death in my own religious order and in the Catholic Church. But I learned more as I began to tweet about my journey each day on social media. What I thought would be just a couple weeks of tweeting about meditating on death ended up lasting over 500 days.

Thousands of people have joined me on my *memento mori* journey. Many people have bought skulls for their desks and begun meditating on death. Some have even begun to affectionately call me “Sister Death.” But not everyone is comfortable with this type of spiritual practice. I have heard from Catholics who think it is just a strange new fad that borders on the demonic. I understand their concern. What I’m doing is a little strange, but it is not new and it is definitely not demonic.

Memento mori, Latin for “remember your death,” has long been associated with the practice of remembering the unpredictable end of life. The spiritual practice of *memento mori* and the associated symbols and sayings were particularly popular in the medieval church. But the tradition of contemplating one’s mortality in order to live well is deeply rooted in salvation history. After the first sin, God remind-

ed Adam and Eve of their fate: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gn 3:19). God’s warning is the first of many such reminders in Scripture. In the New Testament, Jesus exhorts his disciples to pick up their crosses daily and to remember their death as they follow him to the Place of the Skull: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

Early Christian writers and countless saints refer to the importance of remembering death. In his Rule, St. Benedict exhorted his monks to “keep death daily” before their eyes (4.47). Following this advice from Scripture and tradition has strengthened my faith and transformed my perspective in a way that has influenced my everyday choices. For example, I regularly follow the advice of St. Ignatius Loyola to imagine myself on my deathbed before making a choice. Doing so has not filled me with fear but rather the opposite. I fear death less and make choices for heaven more.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus has conquered death and opened the gates of heaven through the cross. But can we really believe this without meditating on how the cross has completely altered the trajectory of our lives in a personal, concrete way?

Unfortunately, the spiritually fruitful practice of meditating on death has gone by the wayside in the

past century. As early as 1954, Blessed James Alberione noted that people were losing interest in the practice of meditating on what are commonly called the Last Things, including death. Speaking to members of my religious order, the Daughters of St. Paul, he said: “Nowadays there is little human respect for meditating on the Last Things. They say it is no longer modern to meditate on them. It seems to me, however, that death is always modern. It is active every day!”

Lent is a perfect time to begin trying out the practice of meditating on death daily. It can sound intimidating and morose, but remembering death actually helps us to grow in hope and become closer to God. Encouraged by countless saints, *memento mori* is a path of penance that leads to dazzling light. Through meditation on death, we pick up our crosses and walk with Jesus to the Place of the Skull. But our journey does not end there. We follow Jesus to the cross so that we may experience more profoundly the light of the Resurrection in our lives.

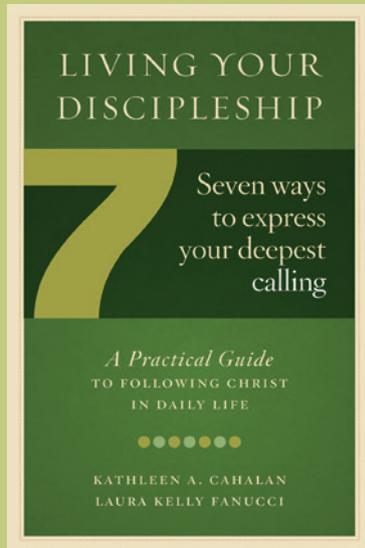
Theresa Aletheia Noble is a religious sister with the Daughters of St. Paul. She is the author of Remember Your Death: Memento Mori Journal and Remember Your Death: Memento Mori Lenten Devotional.

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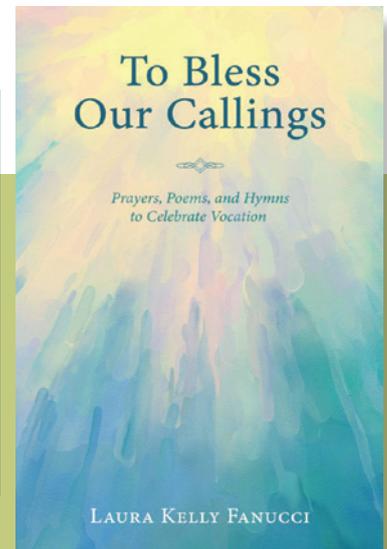
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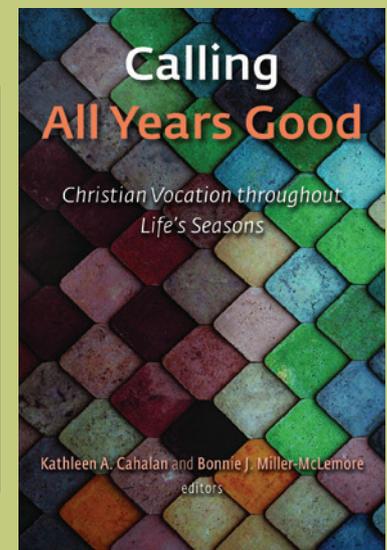


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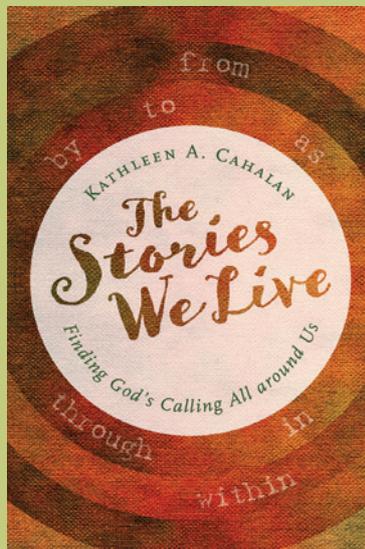
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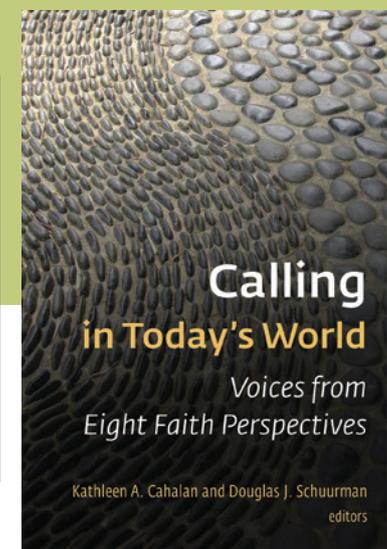
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