

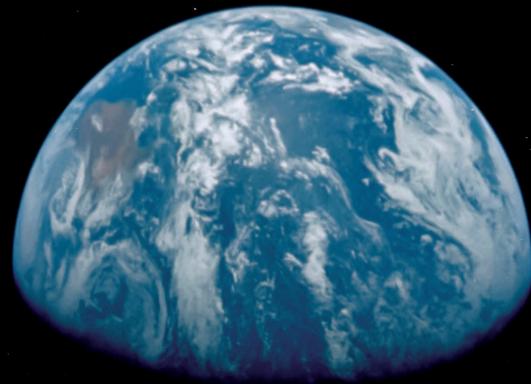
America

JULY 22, 2019

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

2019 CPA MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

THE SPACE ISSUE



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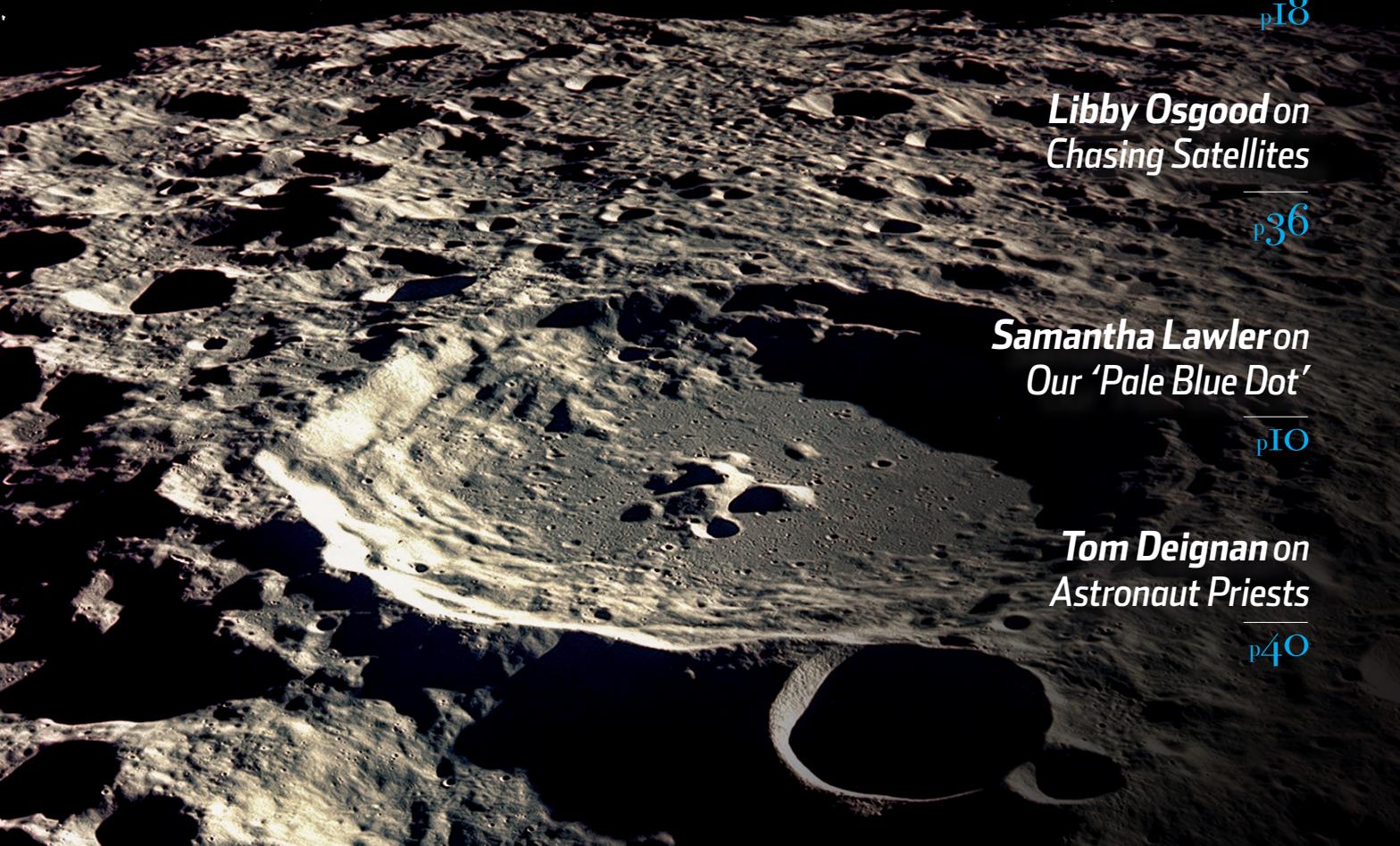
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The Answers, er, Questions to ‘America Jeopardy’ 2019

Did you frame your responses in the form of a question? Apparently, that’s important. Anyway, here are the answers, er, questions to “**America Jeopardy**” 2019 in the July 8 issue. Thanks for playing, and enjoy the beach!

1. What is Tammany Hall? John V. Connorton Sr., a founding **America** patron, served as deputy mayor of New York to Robert F. Wagner Jr., whose election exacerbated a feud between Eleanor Roosevelt and Carmine DeSapio, boss of the (in)famous political machine.

2. Who is William Tecumseh Sherman? The son of the famous Union general, who led the March to the Sea during the Civil War, was a Jesuit and lived at the America House Jesuit Community briefly in the winter and early spring of 1914. An ironic twist: Father Sherman is buried in Grand Coteau, La., next to a Jesuit who was the nephew of Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederate States of America.

3. Who is Dwight D. Eisenhower? Ike sent presidential greetings to **America** on its 50th anniversary in 1959. He had also coached the football team at St. Louis College, a Catholic preparatory school in San Antonio, Tex., to its first winning season in five years, in the fall of 1916.

4. Who is Mikhail Gorbachev? At a Cold War summit in Geneva, the leader of the Soviet Union surprised President Ronald Reagan by quoting from a column by Mary McGrory, who was **America**’s Washington correspondent. McGrory’s cousin, Brian, is the current editor in chief of The Boston Globe.

5. Who is Benjamin Franklin? John LaFarge, S.J., sixth editor in

chief of **America**, was Franklin’s great-great-great grandson.

6. Who is Franklin D. Roosevelt? The Jesuit novitiate of St. Andrew-on-Hudson in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., was built on land purchased from the Roosevelt family. Legend has it that Eleanor Roosevelt would occasionally invite the novices for lunch.

7. Who is John F. Kennedy? The editors marked the assassination of the president by printing these poignant words from Shakespeare’s “Hamlet” on the cover: “The cease of majesty/ Dies not alone/ but, like a gulf, doth draw/ What’s near it with it.”

8. Who is Edward I. Koch? In 1989, the mayor of New York appointed Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., who had served as the 10th editor in chief of **America**, as the first chairman of the New York City Campaign Finance Board.

9. Who is Ernest Hemingway? The author of *The Sun Also Rises* did not like Ezra Pound, the controversial writer and **America** contributor. He was not alone.

10. Who is Felipe VI? Leo J. O’Donovan, S.J., longtime contributor to **America** and emeritus president of Georgetown University, attended his wedding. The king is a Georgetown graduate.

11. Who is John Cheever? George W. Hunt, S.J., 11th editor in chief, wrote an entire book dedicated to the writings of the Chekhov of the Suburbs.

12. Who is John Podesta? Hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee in 2016 revealed that the chairman of the Hillary Clinton campaign and former White House chief of staff had been reading **America**.

13. Who is Eugene O’Neill? The Nobel Prize-winning playwright lived

in a hotel near **America**’s first editorial office in New York City.

14. What is New York University? John E. Sexton, a longtime subscriber to **America**, once described the school near Washington Square as “the world’s first secular, Jesuit university.”

15. What is the 18th Amendment? The editors of **America** opposed prohibition, which they understood to be, in part, an anti-Catholic plot. Or so they said.

16. Who is John Foster Dulles? This U.S. secretary of state from 1953 to 1959 was the father of Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., who was a frequent contributor to **America**.

17. Who is Cardinal Richard Cushing? The third archbishop of Boston donated the funds that the editors used to purchase new headquarters for **America** in 1962. The current archbishop will tell you he is still paying the price for Cushing’s largesse.

18. What is General Electric? James Martin, S.J., editor at large of **America**, worked with Michael J. Cosgrove, a member of **America**’s board of directors, at the multinational conglomerate.

19. Who is Robert Mugabe? Boy, did we get that one wrong! In 1980, **America**’s editors praised Zimbabwe’s new prime minister, saying he was “the very essence of reassurance and conciliation.” Not even close.

20. Who is Robert F. Kennedy? In June 2018, I presided at the graveside service at Arlington National Cemetery marking the 50th anniversary of his death. It was the honor of a lifetime. *Deo Gratias!*

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



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AP Photo/Bernat Armangue

A Catholic nun and other worshipers in the Corpus Christi procession in the village of Bejar, Spain, on June 23.
Cover: iStock

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The Big Bang, explained

Democratic presidential hopefuls marked the official launch of the 2020 campaign in Miami, Fla., with two nights of debate, with 10 candidates participating each night. In an online survey, **America** asked members of its “U.S. Politics Catholic Discussion Group” on Facebook and other readers for their thoughts on the debates.

After viewing the debates, was there any issue that emerged that you wanted to examine more? Why?

Crossing the border as a civil offense instead of a criminal one. I thought I was up on the current debate, but this conversation is new to me.

Amy Fielder

Grass Lake, Mich.

Afghanistan and Iran, because of Rep. Tulsi Gabbard’s exchange with one of the other candidates about the Taliban, and her insistence that war would be disastrous.

Jennifer Telfer

Republic, Mo.

Health care plans, student loans. Several of my children struggle with providing insurance for their families, and all have student loan debts.

Maureen Glavey

Mobile, Ala.

Busing. I was curious why such an old issue had become such a turning point for one candidate. It appeared to me to be a largely empty “gotcha” issue.

Alfred Chavez

Albuquerque, N.M.

After viewing the debates, what issue do you want to see discussed more? Why?

I would like to hear more about the specifics of health care coverage plans from the Democratic candidates. I know what a difference it has made in our finances now that my husband and I are both on Medicare. We have been relieved both by the reduced cost of premiums and our ability to see any doctor we choose, without worrying about whether or not that person is in our network. This guaranteed coverage should be available to everyone on a voluntary basis.

Becky Wilhoite

Lexington, Mass.

It is a real shame that the D.N.C. has [thus far] declined to have a debate whose sole focus is climate change. I think there were one or two questions each night about the subject, which is wholly unacceptable.

John Elwell

Midlothian, Va.

The disconnect between social justice issues and abortion. I strongly believe that an unborn baby is a human being with human rights, and I strongly support social justice for the poor and vulnerable. I struggle with the Democratic Party position on abortion, but the Republican Party seems to ignore social justice in favor of wealth.

Joan Doyle

Villa Park, Calif.

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

*Fifty years ago, this summer, President Richard M. Nixon received the longest long-distance telephone call in history—from the astronauts of Apollo 11, who had just taken “one giant leap for mankind.” Soon after, the editors of **America** reflected on the moon landing: “The journey of Apollo 11,” they wrote, “embodies profound significance for America and the world, we are all convinced. But we are still struggling to discover what that significance may be.” Five decades on, that work continues.*

The anniversary provides not just a moment for nostalgia but an occasion to revisit the values that should inform our public judgement. Last year, President Trump directed the Pentagon to begin planning for a space force. The militarization of space is a frightening prospect. We would do well to recall the words of another president, the one who set this country on its course to the moon: “Space can be explored,” President John F. Kennedy said, “without feeding the fires of war, without repeating the mistakes that man has made in extending his writ around this globe of ours.” Amen to that.

Enjoy the issue!

Matt Malone, S.J.

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Trump's Iran Sanctions Lack Moral and Strategic Justification

President Trump displayed laudable prudence when he walked back an “ordered strike” on military targets in Iran on June 20, after an unmanned U.S. drone was shot down. That makes it all the more regrettable that the Trump administration’s imposition of tougher economic sanctions appears to lack this same consideration.

The new round of sanctions on Iran, along with re-established ones, are crippling the Iranian economy. Inflation has risen to more than 37 percent, and the Iranian rial has fallen by around 70 percent since early 2018. Many Iranians now worry about the availability of food and lifesaving medicines as a result. Economic sanctions can have consequences that are just as tragic as those of military action. For example, 576,000 Iraqi children died prematurely in the five years following economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations in 1990. Economic sanctions can also nudge societies toward devastating overuse of land and energy resources.

Economic sanctions are not intrinsically immoral; in the past they

have discouraged military force and leveraged negotiations for peace. But as the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* instructs, if economic sanctions are used, it must be with “great discernment” and subject to “strict legal and ethical criteria.” Ethicists and diplomats have argued that for sanctions to be moral, they must have minimal impact on average civilians, especially the vulnerable. For any sanctions, moral or otherwise, to be effective, they need to be structured in accordance with clearly defined objectives.

Current sanctions on Iran do not meet these criteria. If the purpose of the sanctions regime is to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, the president would need to reconsider his decision to withdraw from the painstakingly negotiated Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. That agreement, supported by Pope Francis and the U.S. bishops, had halted nuclear-weapons-grade uranium enrichment in Iran. There are signs that the agreement is salvageable. Iran’s foreign minister has said

that Iran would return to abiding by the agreement if other countries did the same.

If, however, the goal of these new sanctions is to diminish Iran’s influence, they require further consideration and clear explanation. Reducing Iran’s regional influence and support for terrorist organizations is a defensible goal. But if recent decades have taught us anything, it is that U.S. actions in the Middle East can have unintended and deadly consequences. Well-intentioned but unrealistic goals prevent a flexible framework necessary for incremental relief, essential for bringing countries to the negotiating table. Without a reasonable chance that sanctions will succeed, the United States risks engaging in an unending financial war with Iran that could slip into a military one at the slightest provocation.

The United States can save lives, reduce the risk of escalation into war and increase its chances of stopping Iran from building a nuclear bomb by lifting this latest round of sanctions.

Court Nixes Quick Fix for Gerrymandering

Last month the U.S. Supreme Court declined to set limits on gerrymandering, the practice of drawing the borders of a state’s legislative districts in such a way as to increase the seats won by one political party far above the share of the vote it receives statewide. At issue in the Supreme Court case were congressional districts drawn by state legislatures in North Carolina (where Republican candidates received an aggregate 53 percent of

the vote last year but won 10 out of 13 congressional seats) and Maryland (where Democrats redrew the western “panhandle” congressional district into the Washington, D.C., suburbs, apparently to defeat a Republican incumbent).

In writing the decision for the majority—which included all five justices appointed by Republican presidents and none of the four appointed by Democratic presidents—Chief Justice John Roberts admitted, “Excessive

partisanship in districting leads to results that reasonably seem unjust.” But he decided that the injustice of gerrymandering “does not mean that the solution lies with the federal judiciary.”

The reluctance to invite hundreds of lawsuits over redistricting plans that in some way distort the will of the voters is understandable. But it was the Supreme Court itself in 1964 that used the “one person, one vote” principle to rule that election districts must be redrawn periodically so that they come

Founded in 1909

as close as possible to having equal populations, the purpose being to prevent one party from cementing control through “rotten boroughs” that award seats to tiny, easily managed constituencies. But now centered on an incumbent’s political base and extending in bizarre directions to take in just enough voters to meet population requirements, many current congressional districts are de facto rotten boroughs, even if the court majority does not feel it has the ability to recognize them as such.

The result is that parties get to choose their voters, as opposed to voters getting to choose their representatives.

Even if the Supreme Court were willing, judicial oversight would not be a panacea for gerrymandering. Other reforms are both possible and necessary. One is to begin the years-long process of amending the Constitution to clarify who has the authority to draw electoral districts and what methods are permissible. In the meantime, the most extreme forms of partisan redistricting may still be found to violate state constitutions, if not the federal Constitution. Several states have created independent commissions to draw legislative districts, putting an end to the inherently undemocratic practice of a party redrawing lines to remain in power and eliminate the need to appeal to a majority of voters.

Legislation or referendums to create such independent bodies can prohibit the worst methods of gerrymandering, like splitting communities along racial lines or packing all of one party’s voters into a single district so that it has almost no chance of winning any other district. But even this remedy requires oversight by the press and by voters to ensure that the redistricting cartographers continue to play fair. The Supreme Court has decided not to take on the role of deciding whether electoral maps uphold democratic principles. That means the job falls to the rest of us.

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Making sense of the precarious, pale blue dot we call home

There are 4,009 planets known to be orbiting stars outside our solar system (as of this writing), with telescope surveys discovering more of these exoplanets every day. Finding Earth 2.0, a planet capable of supporting life as we know it, is often the stated goal of these surveys. But are any of these thousands of exoplanets anything like Earth?

We do not know much about them. Taking a picture of an exoplanet is like trying to take a picture of a firefly crawling on the hood of a car while its headlights are on—from several miles away. Only a handful of planets have been imaged in this way. They are all larger than Jupiter and more distant from their host stars than Jupiter is from the sun, and they look like featureless points of light.

The vast majority of exoplanets have been discovered as they periodically block light from their star or cause a tiny wobble in their star's position as a result of their orbit. These indirect measurements mean that all we know about these exoplanets are their sizes and their orbital distances. We do not even know the composition of these planets. They could be solid rock, rocky cores with thick atmospheres or small gas planets with no solid surface at all.

The closest known exoplanet orbits Proxima Centauri, our stellar next-door neighbor. It is so close to its star that it completes an orbit in only 11 Earth days. But because Proxima Centauri is a small, cool star, this close orbit means that the planet is in the star's habitable zone, sometimes called the Goldilocks zone; not too hot, not too cold, it is just right for liquid water. But to say that the planet is actually habitable invokes a discouragingly long list of assumptions about

the atmosphere and composition of the planet. All we know for now is that the orbit does not rule out the possibility of life as we know it. We have only one example of what a habitable planet looks like—and thousands of exoplanets with unknown properties to test against it.

The Voyager 1 space probe has been traveling away from the Earth for 42 years, and it is currently hurtling away from us at about 10 miles per second. Surely it must be approaching our nearest neighbor by now? No. In more than four decades of traveling 20 times faster than a bullet, Voyager 1 has managed to cover only 0.05 percent of the distance between here and Proxima Centauri. We are not going to visit any of the known exoplanets anytime soon.

In 1990, at the suggestion of Prof. Carl Sagan, the science team for Voyager 1 turned its camera back toward Earth and took a picture from four billion miles away, the average distance between Pluto and the sun. In this image, our entire world—meaning every human being who has ever lived, every type of living organism ever discovered, every habitat known to support life—is contained in a single pixel, nearly drowned out by sunlight. This image shows how truly fragile and isolated we are on this planet, floating in the vastness of space. Dr. Sagan wrote that this image “underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly and compassionately with one another and to preserve and cherish that pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”

People often think that because I am an astronomer, I do not care about this planet. (I am used to snarky comments like, “You should use your

brain power to solve problems here on Earth, not to think about outer space.”) This could not be further from the truth. My research on our solar system and exoplanets has reinforced in my mind the fact that our Earth is rare and extraordinary, and that an incredibly low-probability sequence of events had to transpire to make it stable and habitable. This knowledge that our small planet is so unique and fragile pushes me to make environmentally responsible decisions and to teach others what I have learned both as an astrophysicist and an environmentalist.

Sadly, our current consumption patterns could render our common home uninhabitable within decades. To keep Earth intact for the only life we know requires a dramatic shift in human behavior. As we stand on the tipping point of runaway climate change, Pope Francis' timely encyclical “*Laudato Si'*” urges us to take swift action to protect the vitality of the only place in the universe known to host life.

We will always look to the stars, but we should not count on finding all our answers there. We need to act now to protect our fragile, uniquely habitable, pale blue dot.

Samantha Lawler is a Plaskett Fellow at the NRC Herzberg Astronomy & Astrophysics Research Centre in Victoria, British Columbia. This fall she will be an assistant professor of astronomy at Campion College, University of Regina, Saskatchewan.

“Lord, teach me to be generous,
to serve you as you deserve, to give
and not to count the cost, to fight
and not to heed the wounds, to toil
and not to seek for rest, to labor and
not to ask for reward, save that of
knowing that I am doing your will.
Amen.”

St. Ignatius Loyola

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On July 31, the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, the priests and staff of America Media will gather to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving, at which we will remember all our subscribers and benefactors, including you. We invite you to join us in prayer for our ministry here at *America*.

For centuries Jesuits have kept their eyes on the heavens above

By William Critchley-Menor

Fifty years ago this month, Neil Armstrong took his first steps on the moon. Centuries earlier, in 1651, the Jesuit astronomer Giovanni Riccioli was mapping and naming the craters on the moon that astronauts would one day see in person. At the top of his map of the moon, Riccioli wrote, “Neither do men inhabit the moon nor do souls migrate there.” He was one in a long line of Jesuits who devoted their lives to questions not only about souls, but also about asteroids, meteorites and stars.

In his address to the Jesuits at their 35th General Congregation in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI said, “The church

needs you, relies on you...to reach those physical and spiritual places which others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching.” From the earliest days of the order, Jesuits have been reaching those physical and spiritual places—even in space.

“Throughout the history of the Society, the Jesuits have been key players in astronomy,” said Robert Macke, S.J., a specialist in meteorites who works at the Vatican Observatory in Rome. Jesuit contributions to astronomy are significant enough that 34 craters on the moon and several asteroids are named after them.

In fact, one of the moon’s largest crater formations is

ASTRONOMICAL ACHIEVEMENTS



◀ **1612** - **Christopher Clavius, S.J.**, professor of mathematics at the Roman College who played a lead role in developing the Gregorian calendar, dies in Rome.

1651 - **Giovanni Riccioli, S.J.**, publishes a moon map that includes a lunar nomenclature still used today.



◀ **1753** - **Roger Boscovich, S.J.**, discovers there is no atmosphere on the moon.

1801 - **Giuseppe Piazzi**, a priest of the Theatine order, discovers the dwarf planet Ceres.



◀ **1860** - **Angelo Secchi, S.J.**, credited with making the first spectroscopic survey of the stars, becomes one of the first people to photograph the sun during an eclipse.

1906 - **Johann Hagen, S.J.**, former director of Georgetown University’s observatory, becomes director of the Vatican Observatory. There is a crater named after him on the far side of the moon.

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin,
man on the moon, July 20, 1969



Photo courtesy of NASA

named for Christopher Clavius, S.J. (1538-1612). His astronomical and mathematical genius played a major role in the formation of the Gregorian calendar, the calendar system in almost universal use today. During his lifetime, he was referred to as the “Euclid of the 16th century,” and he wrote textbooks that were read all over the world.

Among those who learned from Clavius was Galileo, with whom he carried on a significant correspondence. Galileo relied on other Jesuits as well. Paschal Scotti, in his 2017 book *Galileo Revisited*, writes that “up until 1616 the Jesuits had been the greatest support to Galileo, and time and again he turned to them as the beacons of scientific excellence and integrity in all his difficulties.”

But another Jesuit, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, played a key role in the beginnings of the Galileo Affair. Bellarmine, on behalf of the Holy Office, was asked to inform Galileo that he had been accused of heresy. He encouraged Galileo either to present heliocentrism only as a hypothesis or to provide sufficient evidence to prove that the earth rotated around the sun. Galileo, although he was right, did not have enough proof to satisfy the standards of the natural philosophy of the day.

More than a century later, it would be Roger Bosovich, S.J. (1711-87)—a physicist and astronomer credited

with developing a precursor to atomic theory—who would persuade the Vatican to remove the works of Copernicus, whose heliocentric theories Galileo championed, from a list of prohibited books.

The Jesuit tradition of astronomical discoveries continued with Angelo Secchi, S.J. (1818-78). He was the first to systematically classify stars using spectroscopy, breaking starlight into its component colors. “His classification scheme was later borrowed and expanded by the Harvard Observatory to create the classification system that is still used today,” Brother Macke said.

During his time as director of the Roman College, Secchi built an observatory on the roof of St. Ignatius Church in Rome. He studied sunspots and made important connections between solar activity and changes in the earth’s magnetic field. His book on the sun “was one of the definitive works of its day,” Brother Macke said.

But Jesuit contributions to astronomy are not confined to the past. The work continues today at the Vatican Observatory, which is entrusted to the Jesuits. According to Brother Macke, Richard D’Souza, S.J., and his collaborator from the University of Michigan, Eric Bell, recently discovered that the nearby Andromeda galaxy merged with another galaxy about two billion years ago.

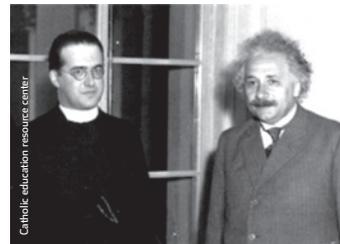
Brother Macke is inspired by his Jesuit astronomer colleagues who are studying in a variety of astronomical fields: Brother Guy Consolmagno, meteorites and asteroids; Father Richard Boyle, star clusters; Fathers David



Image: CNS

◀ **1910** - Sisters Emilia Ponzoni, Regina Colombo, Concetta Finardi and Luigia Panceri work to map over 481,215 stars, one of the largest scientific undertakings up to this time.

1929 - Francis X. Kugler, S.J., whose work on Babylonian astronomy earned him a crater on the moon that bears his name, dies in Lucerne, Switzerland.



Catholic education resource center

◀ **1927** - George Lemaitre proposes a theory of an expanding universe. He is the first to describe what is later called the Big Bang. Albert Einstein called his theory is “the most beautiful and satisfactory explanation of creation to which I have ever listened.”

Brown and Chris Corbally, stellar evolution; Father Gabriele Gionti, quantum gravity and cosmology; and Father Jean-Baptiste Kikwaya-Eluo, near-Earth asteroids and comets.

Their work is no less remarkable than that of their Jesuit predecessors. Brother Macke, along with Brother Consolmagno, Father Kikwaya-Eluo, Father Boyle and Father George Coyne, former director of the Vatican Observatory, all have had asteroids named after them by the International Astronomical Union in recognition of their contributions to space exploration.



▲ This selenograph, or moon map, was created by Giovanni Riccioli, S.J., and Francesco Grimaldi, S.J., in 1651. Today it adorns the entrance to the moon exhibit at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

The Jesuits at the Vatican Observatory find themselves serving in mission territory. “Like Jesuits before us, we do science together, we pray together, there is no problem,” said Paul Mueller, S.J., a historian and philosopher of science. He thinks that in the modern world many people perceive science as more of an obstacle than a help to faith. “Our mission is to show by what we do and how we live that the church loves and appreciates science,” Father Mueller said.

“I serve as a sign that scientific pursuits and religious life go hand in hand,” agreed Brother Macke. “There is no conflict. My presence as a Jesuit scientist in public and at scientific meetings gives others the opportunity to engage me on questions of faith and science and to challenge their assumptions about the relationship between the two.”

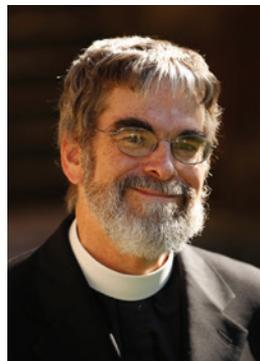
These Jesuits are continuing a tradition that is not only astronomical but mystical. St. Ignatius, who also has an asteroid named in his honor, wrote in his autobiography that gazing at the stars gave him “the greatest consolation.”

Diego Laynez, one of the first Jesuits, wrote that at night St. Ignatius “would go up on the roof of the house, with the sky there above him. He would sit there quietly, absolutely quietly. He would take off his hat and look up for a long time at the sky. Then he would fall on his knees, bowing profoundly to God.... And the tears would begin to flow down his cheeks like a stream.”

Ignatius could not have imagined an observatory being built on the roof of a church that bore his name any more than Giovanni Riccioli could have fathomed a man walking on the moon he mapped. But 50 years after that “giant leap” for humankind, Jesuits continue to peer through telescopes in wonder, finding God in all spaces.

William Critchley-Menor, S.J., editorial intern.
Twitter: @billymenorsj.

1978 - George Coyne, S.J., appointed director of the Vatican Observatory; became acting head of Steward Observatory, 1979-80. Father Coyne had carried out a spectrophotometric study of the lunar surface at Georgetown University in 1962.



2014 - Guy Consolmagno, S.J., current director of the Vatican Observatory, wins the Carl Sagan Medal from the American Astronomical Society Division for Planetary Sciences for excellence in public communication in planetary sciences.



2019 Libby Osgood, C.N.D., former engineer with NASA, professes first vows in the Congregation of Notre Dame.

See story on page 36.





Jesuits plan to appeal decision to revoke school's Catholic status

Charles C. Thompson, archbishop of Indianapolis, and Gina Fleming, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, speak at a news conference at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral on June 27.

The Midwest Jesuits plan to appeal a decree by Archbishop Charles Thompson of Indianapolis that Brebeuf Jesuit High School is no longer recognized as a Catholic school. The school's administrators refused to terminate a teacher who is in a same-sex marriage as requested by the archdiocese. In a statement released on June 20, Brian Paulson, S.J., superior of the Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus, said the order will appeal the decision "through the formal appeal process established in church law: first, pursuing local recourse to the archbishop, and, if necessary, hierarchical recourse to the Vatican."

According to the archbishop's decree, Brebeuf Jesuit High School "can no longer use the name Catholic and will no longer be identified or recognized as a Catholic institution."

Kurt Martens, a canon law professor at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., said a bishop does have the right to take away the title "Catholic" from a school within his diocese but says that this case enters murky canonical ground.

Brebeuf "is a Catholic school which is being directed by a public juridical person, which is the Jesuits," explained Professor Martens. "If it is a diocesan school, then it is clear that the bishop would have control. But when you get to the level of religious, what is the control that a bishop still has?"

In an interview with **America**, Father Paulson said, "I acknowledge that the archbishop definitely has the right to decide what ministries/apostolates in the archdiocese can call themselves Catholic." He says that where the Jesuit province and Brebeuf differ with the archdiocese is the degree of autonomy in personnel decisions appropriate for a school operated by a religious order in accordance with a religious order's right, also recognized in canon law, to direct its own apostolates.

Father Paulson said that "Brebeuf and the Midwest Province believe that the archbishop's request that the school not

renew the teacher's contract is neither a prudent nor necessary exercise of his responsibility to oversee 'faith and morals' as well as Catholic education within the archdiocese."

According to a statement it issued, "The Archdiocese of Indianapolis recognizes all teachers, guidance counselors and administrators as ministers." William Verbryke, S.J., president of Brebeuf, said that while Brebeuf would apply such a standard for "the president, the principal, campus ministers [and] religion teachers," it would not use it as the "yardstick" for other teachers. He said it is "because this particular teacher is not a religion teacher or campus minister that we felt that we could not in conscience dismiss him from employment."

Father Paulson says that the archbishop wants all Catholic schools in Indianapolis to include language in their contracts and handbooks defining every teacher as a minister. His understanding is that this approach is meant to guarantee that schools "have the right in civil law not to hire and to fire/not renew employees whose lives do not conform to Catholic doctrine." By recognizing all employees as ministers, a school would be able to invoke "the 'ministerial exemption' in civil law in regards to discrimination," he said, adding, "Brebeuf chooses not to take this approach."

While looking for all employees to be supportive of the Catholic mission of Brebeuf, Father Paulson explained that the school would make "more of an 'all things considered' determination of the faith, morals, character, talent and ability to contribute to the mission of the school" when determining whether to retain employees. While recognizing that "this teacher's marriage is not in conformity with church doctrine," Father Paulson said that Brebeuf believes "the teacher makes a valuable contribution to the mission of the school."

William Critchley-Menor, S.J., editorial intern.
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'A drink of water could save a life.'

What Catholic social teaching says about the No More Deaths trial

On June 11, a jury in Tucson, Ariz., could not reach a verdict on whether or not Scott Warren, a high school geography teacher and humanitarian aid worker for the advocacy group No More Deaths, was guilty of aiding two migrants who had illegally crossed the U.S.-Mexico border. Mr. Warren was arrested in early 2018, when he gave Kristian Pérez Villanueva and José Sacaria Goday food, water and shelter while also allegedly providing instructions about how to avoid U.S. Border Patrol checkpoints.

This is not the first time a member of No More Deaths has been targeted by the Border Patrol, said Justine Orlovsky-Schnitzler, a staff member of No More Deaths. In both 2005 and 2017, a member of the group was charged for transporting migrants, though in both of those cases, the charges were eventually dropped. She called the case against Mr. Warren this year “the escalation of a legal battle, like the U.S. government is trying to make an example of Scott.”

No More Deaths regularly places jugs of water and food in highly traveled areas in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona for migrants. “Sometimes, a drink of water could save a life,” Ms. Orlovsky-Schnitzler said.

The Rev. Alison Harrington, pastor of the Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson and a community mem-

ber of No More Deaths, said that there is wide support for the group’s humanitarian work in the community. Ms. Harrington, who attended the trial, described an instance where the prosecution asked Mr. Warren whether or not he gave the migrants food or water. “These were questions that, if answered affirmatively, would be a criminal act,” she said. “For those of us who are Christians, these words echo so clearly the words of Christ from Matthew 25. For us, an affirmative answer means salvation.”

Catholic social teaching affirms both the right of state sovereignty and the right to migrate. In 2003, the bishops of the United States and Mexico grappled with this issue in their joint pastoral letter “Strangers No Longer.” Daniel Cosacchi, a religious studies professor at Fairfield University, said that three important principles emerged from this letter. The first is the right for people to migrate to ensure the safety of their lives and, in particular, the lives of their children. The second is the right for a country to regulate its own borders and maintain sovereignty. The third is that countries should respect the human dignity of migrants.

“When they exercise their sovereignty, [nations] have to do it with justice and mercy,” Mr. Cosacchi said. “The federal government only really recognizes the second principle.”



CNS photo/Peter Tian, Global Sisters Report

David Buer, a Franciscan brother, and Judy Bourg, S.S.N.D., members of the Tucson Samaritans, drop off food and water on a migrant trail in the Sonoran Desert northeast of Ajo, Ariz., in May 2018.

He criticized Mr. Warren’s prosecutors for wanting to punish him for adhering to Christian principles by giving out food and water. “This is a person who is being prosecuted for upholding human dignity.”

Brianne Jacobs, an assistant professor of theology at Emmanuel College in Boston, said, “Basically, every principle of Catholic social teaching is being violated in the ways that the aid workers are being prosecuted and in the way that the border in general is being regulated.”

On the conflict between state sovereignty and human dignity, she said: “It’s a false dichotomy. You can regulate your borders and do so with justice and mercy. You don’t have to regulate your borders with cruelty and inhumanity.”

An estimated 7,000 people have died attempting to cross into the United States through Arizona over the last 20 years, according to the Border Patrol.

Kevin Christopher Robles, *editorial intern*.
Twitter: @its_krobe.

 For more international reporting, visit americamagazine.org/dispatches.



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew prays before a reliquary containing bone shards that are believed to belong to St. Peter.

GOODNEWS: Pope Francis presents relics of St. Peter to Patriarch Bartholomew

Pope Francis has offered a bronze reliquary containing bone fragments believed to belong to St. Peter to Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. The bronze case contains nine of the bone fragments discovered during excavations of the necropolis under St. Peter’s Basilica that began in the 1940s. While no pope has ever declared the bones to be authentic, St. Paul VI announced in 1968 that the “relics” of St. Peter had been “identified in a way which we can hold to be convincing.”

Pope Francis removed them from the chapel in the papal apartments on June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. Patriarch Bartholomew had sent a delegation led by Archbishop Job of Telmessos to the Vatican for the feast day celebrations. After the solemn Mass, Pope Francis and Archbishop Job went to St. Peter’s tomb under the high altar to pray.

Then, the archbishop recounted, Pope Francis asked him to wait because he had a gift for his “brother” Patriarch Bartholomew. After a drive to the Apostolic Palace, they entered the chapel of the old papal apartment and the pope took the reliquary and offered it to his guest, according to Vatican News.

“For us, this was an extraordinary and unexpected event that we could not have hoped for,” Vatican News quoted the archbishop as saying.

It was “another gigantic step toward concrete unity,” Archbishop Job said.

At a ceremony on June 30 to receive the relics and venerate them, Patriarch Bartholomew said, “Pope Francis made this grand, fraternal and historic gesture” of giving the Orthodox fragments of the relics of St. Peter.

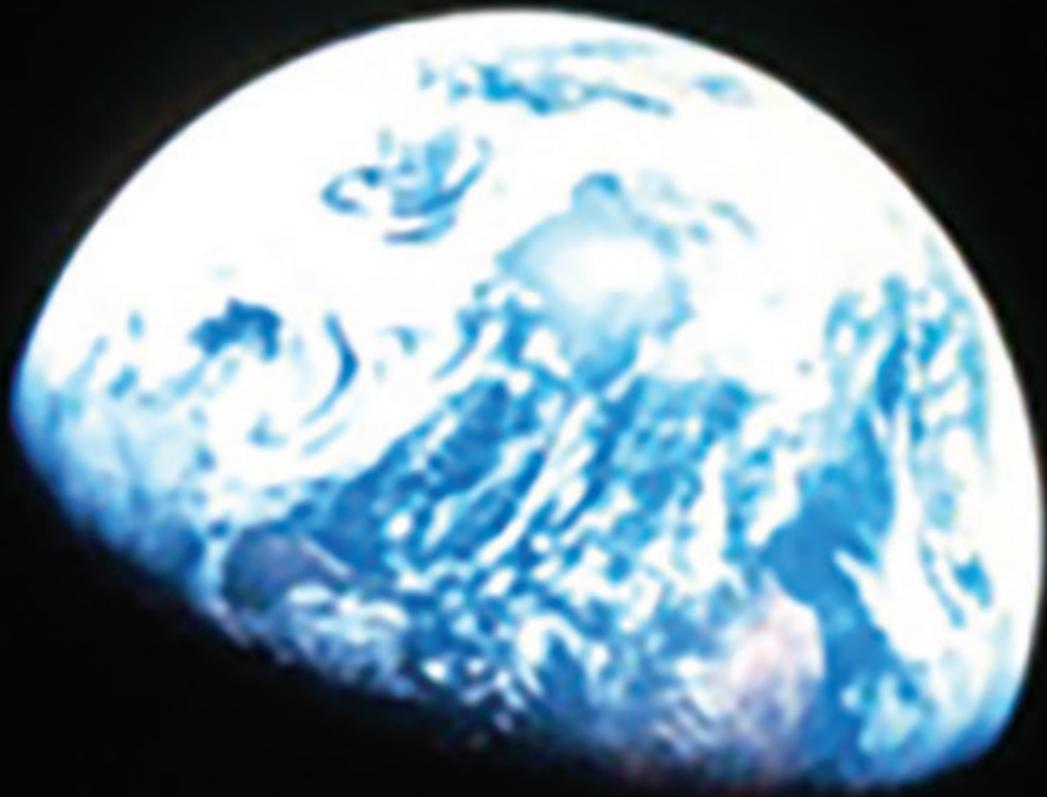
“I was deeply moved,” the patriarch said. “It was a brave and bold initiative of Pope Francis.”

Cindy Wooden, *Catholic News Service*

LITURGICAL SPACE

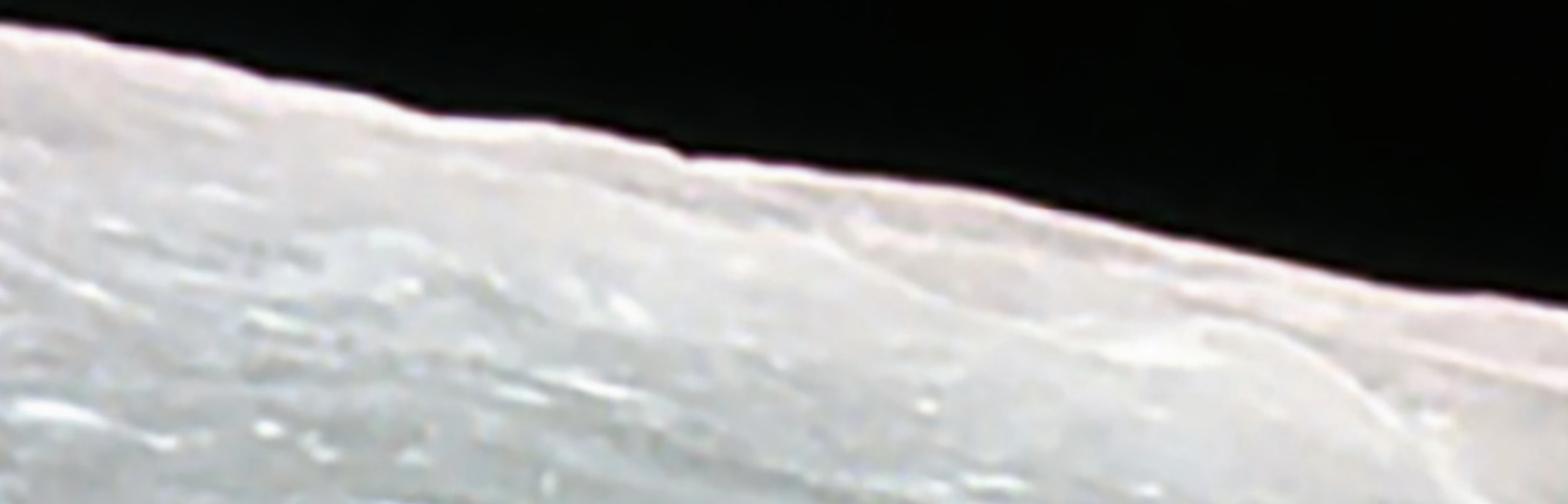
By James T. Keane

The Earth rises above the lunar horizon, as seen by Bill Andrews from Apollo 8 on the morning of Dec. 24, 1968, while in orbit around the moon.



When Catholics imagined a chapel on the moon

An odd feature of growing up in Southern California in the 1980s was a consequence of the presence of Edwards Air Force Base in the nearby Mojave Desert. Every few months, one of the NASA space shuttles would re-enter the atmosphere to land at Edwards, and the double sonic boom it caused would rattle windows for hundreds of miles around. It was a regular (and startling) reminder that the United States was still sending men and women into outer space.





The stars and planets visible through this portal would provide an immediate visual symbol of that journey toward the transcendent.

When the space shuttle Columbia made its maiden launch on April 12, 1981, newscasters remarked on a number of interesting side stories. One, the voyage occurred on the 20th anniversary of the first manned space flight. Two, it marked the first time the United States had put an astronaut into space in six years. Three—the most fascinating to 6-year-old me—the mission commander, John Young, had walked on the moon.

The frantic Cold War quest in the West to outpace the Soviet Union in scientific endeavor resulted in a proliferation of technological breakthroughs from the first manned flight (by the Soviets!) in 1961 to the moment Neil Armstrong first stepped onto the moon in 1969. During almost the exact same time span, the world of Catholic theology enjoyed tremendous intellectual ferment in numerous areas of study and expression, with some of the most dramatic and visible transformations occurring in the area of liturgy and architecture.

When it became likely in the second half of that decade that humankind would actually succeed in landing a person on the moon within a few years, the prospect also opened up whole new worlds of possibility for theologians. Juvenal's phrase, which had been adopted by Jesuit missionaries centuries later, "Unus non sufficit orbis" ("One world is not enough"), suddenly became a real option. Questions were asked that we would never ask today, including one that sounds almost like a joke: What would a church on the moon look like?

It was no joke to the editors of the November 1967 issue of *Liturgical Arts*. The quarterly journal brought those two revolutions together in an unexpected way, presenting architectural drawings, conceptual essays and theological reflections in a special issue on the topic "A Chapel on the

Moon: 2000 A.D." Looking back today, more than five decades after its publication (and almost two decades after the putative date for the never-realized chapel's dedication), it can be tempting to imagine the authors and architect engaging in a campy, sci-fi fantasy vision of a surreal and far-off future. On the contrary, the subject of moon colonization and the liturgical needs of its colonists was quite a serious topic for the authors (and presumably their readers). It is also a reminder that it never happened.

WHOSE IDEA WAS THIS?

The idea for the chapel came from a *New York Times Magazine* article published on May 28, 1967, "Moon Colony 2000 A.D.," in which the famous science fiction author Isaac Asimov expounded on what a lunar colony at the dawn of the 21st century might look like. His largely underground colony included space for a chapel. Terence J. Mangan, then an Oratorian priest, took that fanciful blueprint and envisioned a church that would help a lunar colonist "to integrate his belief and his science, to synthesize his view of the universe with his view of God and himself. To accomplish this all of the insights of the personality sciences as well as those of the physical sciences must be brought into play."

The structure was imagined as a "film sheathed tent defining space and providing visual privacy," with reinforced concrete behind the film-covered walls. Light cables covered with opaque plastic would descend from the roof of the "tent," with a small oculus at the top providing natural light and permitting "observation of celestial bodies." The oculus would be the only point of the chapel touching the surface of the moon, with the entire structure embedded underground in what the authors curiously called "the moon ghetto."

The architect who sketched the design was Mark Mills, a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright. Mr. Mills was making his reputation at the time in the use of innovative materials, and he took advantage of the fact that the environment would not require attention to pressure, temperature and protection from the elements, since those issues would presumably have been addressed by the larger colony itself.

In a nod to Mr. Mangan's notion that the "personality sciences" would play a role in the life of the moon parish, the design included circular nodes arranged on the periphery of the church for living quarters for six Oratorian priests; these areas would also double as meeting areas for "counseling and clinical help to individuals under stress. It is probable that such counseling, and the link with tradition

that it provides, would prove most useful to men learning to adapt to such a totally different environment.”

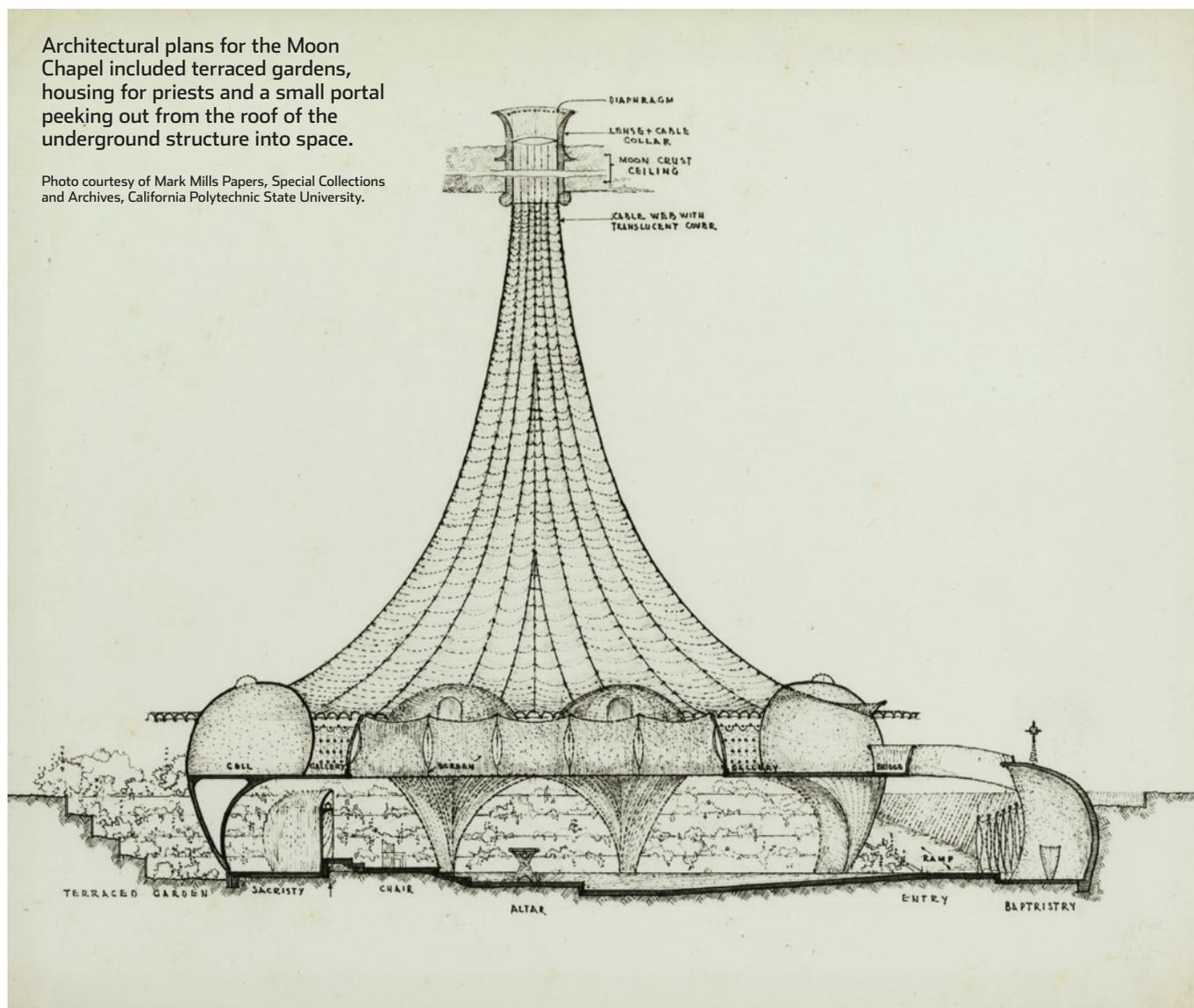
Surprisingly, despite the presumed opportunities a low-gravity environment might provide for more innovative liturgical arrangements, Mr. Mills structured the liturgical elements almost entirely horizontally, with the altar, ambo, presider’s chair and congregational seating all on roughly the same plane. Starting below the nave but rising slightly above it on all sides would be a terraced garden, providing a pleasing visual element as well as a sound-muting function if the rest of the colony’s machinery disturbed the liturgical ambiance within. The living quarters would be suspended above the floor of the nave but slightly outside the unified body of the church, and privacy would be achieved through the use of discreet

grillwork that would prevent worshippers from seeing in but would allow the priests in residence to view the liturgy from their rooms.

In an essay in *Liturgical Arts* accompanying Mr. Mangan’s proposal and Mr. Mills’s drawings, an imagined parishioner from the future described some of the activities possible in the nave. They might, however, strike a modern-day reader as rather typical of the post-Vatican II era in which they were written: “We of course sing and dance, perhaps someone does a drama drawn from the experience of the past week that is somehow related to how we try to live in the way—though not in the letter—of the scriptures. We also spend a lot of time telling stories and sharing our inner-most thoughts through creative writing, poetry, forms of visual expression and music.”

Architectural plans for the Moon Chapel included terraced gardens, housing for priests and a small portal peeking out from the roof of the underground structure into space.

Photo courtesy of Mark Mills Papers, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.





As a kind of oasis in a moon colony that the authors imagined would be a noisy, industrialized city, the Moon Chapel was explicitly designed as a place set apart from the everyday life of the city.

PRIESTS IN SPACE

The obvious effort to make the priests' quarters central to the church is only one indication of the close attention paid to the role of the ordained minister in the proposed chapel. In another essay in the same issue of *Liturgical Arts*, the Rev. Clifford Stevens, a U.S. Air Force chaplain, made the case that priests would be central to any colonization effort on the moon.

"Priests stood with Columbus and Magellan on the journeys into the unknown, and with the Vikings, too, when they explored the unknown western ocean," Father Stevens wrote. "Man stands now on the threshold of a far more breathtaking discovery, and so it is not unfitting for the theologian, symbolically or otherwise, to put on a space suit."

Furthermore, Father Stevens claimed, priests would play a crucial role in ensuring that the exploration of space was not simply a matter of material conquest but of spiritual growth for all of humanity. "But whatever may be the achievement," he continued, "the priest will be a part of it. He will inhabit his chapel on the edge of space and help to open the doors to a whole new dimension of human existence."

This elevated role of the priest was reinforced in Mr. Mills's design by the prominence of the presider's chair (in its traditional judge's position in the space, according to ancient Roman schematics) and the existence of a clearly

marked sanctuary, despite the fact that the nave would be structured "in the round" around the centrally placed altar.

A PLACE OF PASSAGE

Ironically, the Moon Chapel shared a number of important characteristics with post-Vatican II Catholic churches in the United States that would place it squarely in the mainstream of Catholic liturgical thought today about church architecture. An important point of comparison can be found in the work of the Rev. Richard S. Vosko, a liturgical design consultant, who identified a plethora of telling characteristics of those churches that serve as "places of imagination" in his book *Designing Future Worship Spaces* published in 1996. Such churches, he wrote, serve as a place of passage, welcome, opportunity and hospitality; of transformation, healing and forgiveness; of unity, light, sound and memory.

It is striking how well the Moon Chapel (proposed three decades before Father Vosko's text) shows a number of the characteristics he expects for a liturgical place of imagination, particularly in three important ways: as a place of *passage*, a place of *light and sound* and a place of *memory*. When viewed as a liturgical space incorporating these three characteristics, the proposed chapel becomes even less of a science fiction fantasy and more of a worship environment simpatico with contemporary liturgical architecture down here on boring old Earth.

As a kind of oasis in a moon colony that the authors imagined would be a noisy, industrialized city filled with factories and the means for the mining of raw materials, the Moon Chapel was explicitly designed as a place set apart from the everyday life of the city. But its design (particularly the oculus looking out into deep space) would remind worshipers that they were still part of the shared "spaceship" dream that has gripped the American imagination since the first astronaut went into orbit. Gathered together in the nave of the church for worship, they would be reminded by the view from above that they were fellow travelers in a new time and space. Like many a space traveler (and generations of sailors) before them, they would peer out onto the external world through a single portal.

The very notion of a nave (Latin *navis*, "ship"), the liturgist Richard Taylor reminds us in his book *How to Read a Church*, is tied up linguistically with nautical images: "The association of the church with a ship, and the congregation as passengers in the ship, indicates the priests and people travelling together towards God." The stars and planets visible through this portal (not to mention Earth itself), unobscured by an atmosphere, would provide an immediate visual symbol of that journey toward



While the Doman Moon Chapel was never built, similar elements of design began to appear in other U.S. churches. For example, the interior of St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco (the cornerstone of which was laid a month after the Liturgical Arts special issue was released) bears a striking resemblance to some of Mark Mills's ideas for the moon chapel.

iStock



For a worshiper in the Moon Chapel, these terraced gardens would be a link to the Earth of their shared past but also a garden of living symbols of their faith.

the transcendent.

In another Liturgical Arts essay on what liturgy in the Moon Chapel would look like, Constance Parvey stressed the importance of transcendence in the liturgy, in part because the moon colony would have eliminated material poverty from the lives of its residents: “Mainly our basic needs are psychological rather than economic. They have more to do with honesty and integrity and compassion than with the problems of being poor.” Even in a world separated from the Christian motif of a struggle for social justice, the people would still be fed liturgically by the presence of the transcendent in the Moon Chapel.

A PLACE OF LIGHT AND SOUND

One look at Mark Mills’s sketches makes it clear that light was a central element in his design. First, natural light would be brought in through the oculus fitted into the cervical collar at the “roof” of the church; when I saw his schematics, I thought immediately of the Pantheon in Rome, where a similar collar serves the primary purpose of supporting the weight of the dome but is largely appreciated by visitors as a source of brilliant light on sunny days. It would also serve symbolically as an *oculus Dei*, an “eye of God” that offers the image of the divine overlooking the congregation during the liturgy.

Second, the long, film-covered cables that descend from the ceiling were to be designed as “light cables,” capable of in some way bringing artificial light into a subterranean (sublunary?) space. Finally, the complete absence of internal support columns or of a baldacchino over the al-

tar would mean that once light entered the interior, there would be nothing to obstruct it from reaching any space in the church.

It is also worth considering what it might mean liturgically to recite the words of the Liturgy of the Hours or the Mass itself in an environment away from Earth. What would it mean to pray “now that we have come to the setting of the sun and have seen the evening star, we sing in praise of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” when Earth actually rises and sets outside the window in the roof? Or to pray “from the rising of the sun to its setting?” To describe the Trinity as “sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall”?

A PLACE OF MEMORY

On the other hand, most residents of the moon in the year 2000 (from the perspective of 1967) would obviously have still retained a close connection to their original home on Earth because there would only be a single generation separating them from a civilization that was entirely earthbound. For this reason, the Moon Chapel would sit at the intersection of the past (by virtue of its inhabitants and their shared memory) and the future (by virtue of its placement in the moon colony and on the temporal edge of a new human reality).

“A space-chapel...becomes, in space, the outpost of five thousand years of human thought. It is a synthesis and a signpost of the whole of man’s past and a torch to guide him into the future,” wrote Father Stevens in *Liturgical Arts*. “It keeps alive in the human mind a vision of man’s dignity and his destiny and wraps the whole aerospace effort in a rationale that is intellectually valid and humanly meaningful.”

For this reason, the visual elements of the Moon Chapel would need to provide important avenues for memory. The terraced gardens that would circle the nave were to be filled with vegetation brought from Earth, providing an important link not only to the planet left behind but also to the scriptural and historical memory of Christianity itself. Plants do not just remind worshipers of their past—they are also important elements in the teaching tradition of the church.

“Just as artists used images of animals, birds and fish to illustrate Christian teaching, so too they used plants,” says Mr. Taylor in *How to Read a Church*. “Artists would portray plants in the way they are used in the Bible, or else would use characteristics of particular plants to make an analogy between them and parts of Christian teaching.”

In this sense, seeing familiar plants is not just a cure for homesickness or a way to acclimate oneself to

a hostile environment. They can serve as a catechism of sorts, in much the way the great medieval cathedrals used stained glass to educate illiterate believers in the faith. When we look over in liturgy and see a bush, we think back to the burning bush in the desert. A tree can remind us of the Garden of Eden or of the cross; we might reflect upon the fig tree and the mustard seed and in a thousand other ways be brought back to the central motifs of the Christian faith through such a garden. For a worshiper in the Moon Chapel, these terraced gardens would be a link to the Earth of their shared past but also a garden of living symbols of their faith.

There is also a sense in which the structure of the Moon Chapel itself would hint at the church's past. As an underground structure only peeking out onto the surface, it might bring to mind the catacombs that served as some of the first locales for communities of worship at the dawn of the Christian faith. And from the perspective of someone in the nave, it might also conjure up images of the soaring interiors of the great Gothic cathedrals of the 12th century and beyond. Finally, the similarity of the Moon Chapel's interior to its modern counterparts on Earth would allow worshipers to connect to the broader tradition of the faith throughout history, reminding them of the continuity of Christian worship even in the discontinuity of a radically new time and place.

IMAGINATION AND TRADITION

All that being said, it can be hard in 2019 to understand why the designers of the Moon Chapel did not show a bit more imagination. Presuming they had figured out how to filter out radiation, why wouldn't they build a soaring glass roof where they could watch Earthrise every day? Why didn't they make use of the lower levels of gravity to make the worship space operate both vertically and horizontally? Why is the entire structure underground instead of soaring above the landscape, an explicit neo-Gothic monument to God in a new world, rather than a catacomb reminiscent of a faith in hiding? Why is the liturgical space in 1967 imagined exclusively according to the cultic model of the priesthood, several years after Vatican II called every believer to share in Christ's mission as "priest, prophet and king"?

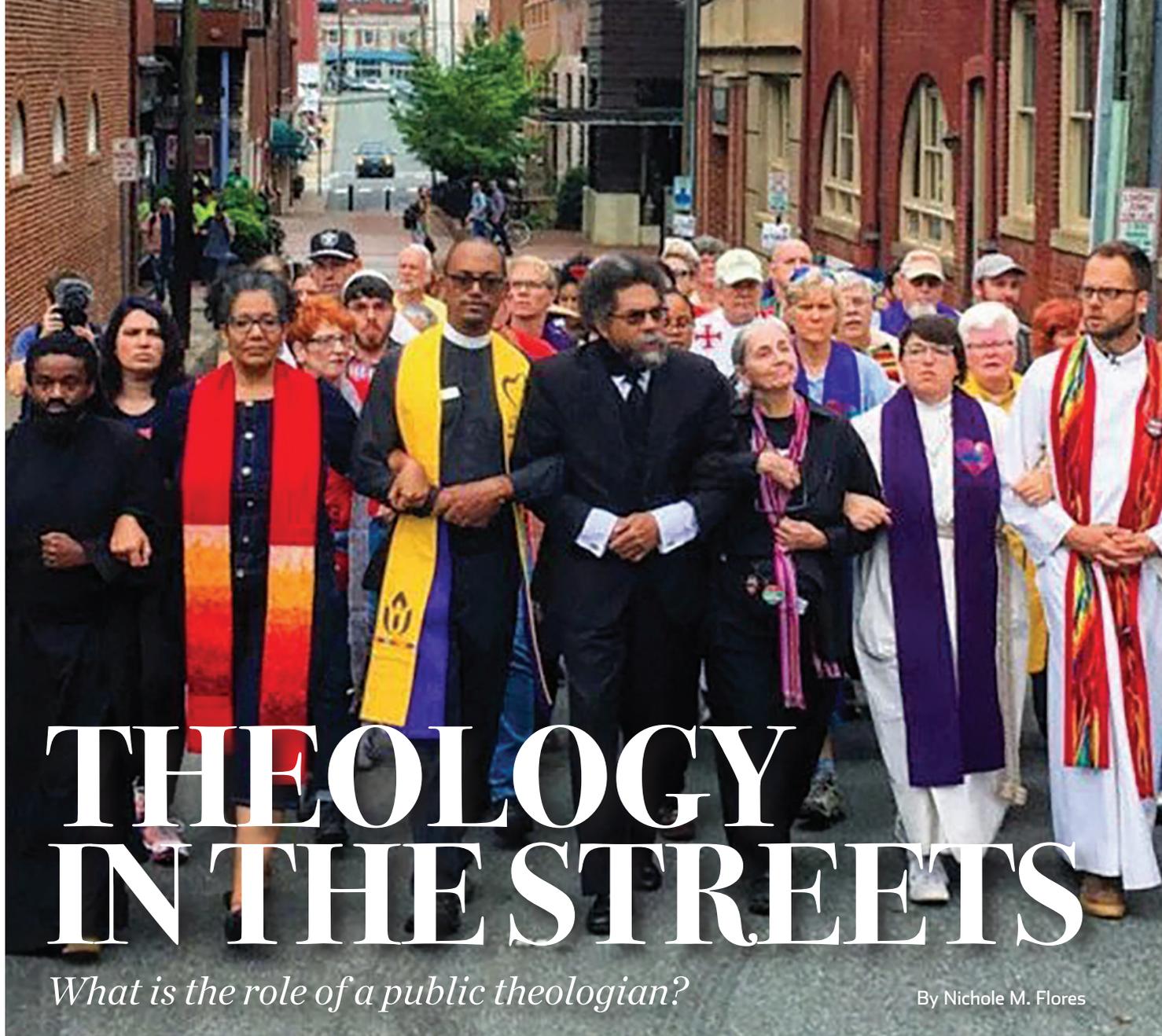
The answer, I suspect, is that the Moon Chapel was not intended as a clear break from the past but rather as a moment in a historical continuum. I wanted the Moon Chapel to be something pioneering and fresh, to be a liturgical and theological statement of new beginnings

and a provocative challenge to rethink the way liturgy can be done in new environments. In this sense, looking through Mr. Mills's plans in the light of tradition and the church's own liturgical norms was a moment of powerful insight: The innovator works in the tradition and perhaps moves the tradition no matter what the environment or mandate.

To the degree that innovation meets the needs and desires of the existing tradition, it can certainly work on the frontiers and promote new understandings, but it cannot do so on its own initiative or its own principles. A universal church operates as a universal community, whether in the suburban United States or in ancient European capitals or, for that matter, on other worlds. And, to be perfectly honest, the Moon Chapel's interior looks to me a lot like that of St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, built two years after the Moon Chapel design was published in *Liturgical Arts*.

At first, that might strike one as an ironic commentary on what Mark Mills and the *Liturgical Arts* editors were attempting in their description of the Moon Chapel. But that otherworldly structure was intended to fit neatly into a larger and more universal church, one that allows for innovation but also hearkens back to a long tradition. Of course, the Moon Chapel would look like its historical peers: It was supposed to be a worship space that respected every time and place in the Christian tradition and invited its imaginary worshipers to do the same. Even on the moon.

James T. Keane is a senior editor of *America*.
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THEOLOGY IN THE STREETS

What is the role of a public theologian?

By Nichole M. Flores

John Courtney Murray, S.J., appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine on Dec. 12, 1960. The iconic cover features a painting of the famous Jesuit by the artist Boris Chaliapin, set against the backdrop of Volume One of the complete works of Robert Bellarmine, S.J. Clad in clerics and half-framed glasses, Father Murray displays a stern expression that became the defining image of the public theologian in the Catholic mind.

Published mere weeks after John F. Kennedy's presidential election, the story, by the writer Douglas Auchincloss, set out to understand Father Murray's vision of the role of Catholics in U.S. public life. And while Kennedy, as a candidate, had been featured on the cover of the magazine on the day before the election, Auchincloss only hints at the election's significance for understanding Catholicism's

place in U.S. public life: "It did not take the 1960 election to establish—though it well served to recall—what a unique encounter of diverse traditions is contained in the words 'American Catholic.'"

Half a century later, Catholic participation in democracy is now taken for granted in the U.S. context. Over 30 percent of members of the 116th U.S. Congress are Catholics, as are five of the nine current U.S. Supreme Court justices. So, too, are at least eight of the candidates for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. When Pope Francis spoke to a joint session of Congress in 2015, he was flanked by the Catholic leaders of both chambers, representing two different political parties. Beyond the realm of electoral politics, Catholics have also been at the forefront of some of the most formidable political and so-



RNS photo by Jordy Yager.

Marchers in a counter-protest against the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., included Cornel West, Traci Blackmon, Osagyefo Sekou and Eric Martin, a Catholic theologian.

ety. The idea resonated with Catholics and non-Catholics alike, influencing thinking about religion and public life in the theological academy and beyond.

Murray's theology also offers insight into our current political climate. He warned that undermining democratic norms for the sake of political expediency would lead to political breakdown that would "doom the best political skill and dedication." In Charlottesville, Va., the Unite the Right rally of Aug. 12, 2017, illustrated a frightening consequence of eroding democratic norms fueled by hateful white supremacy: the increasing mainstream acceptability of violence and intimidation of racial and religious minority groups.

Murray's contributions to both academic and public discourse about religion and public life reminds us why he emerged as a leading Catholic public theologian of his day, read by people, as Auchincloss wrote, "of all sorts and conditions." And yet, Murray's pre-eminence underscores the contested nature of the category of public theologian in our current moment.

Nearly six decades after Murray's appearance on the cover of *Time*, public theology is still seen as limited in terms of who does it and where it is done. The popular image of the Catholic public theologian is often still that of an academically trained theologian who is white, male and ordained and writes theology from a position of institutional power. The power of universities in shaping professional theological structures contributes to the production of theological research that engages neither the church nor the world beyond the halls of academe.

It is tempting for theologians today who write from a position of privilege within the academy to shield ourselves from the violence associated with racism, white supremacy, sexual misconduct and other social threats to our community in the interest of maintaining critical distance in our research and scholarship. But public theology today demands a response to the threats posed to the most vulnerable members of our society.

Theology and Its Publics

The Rev. David Tracy's classic conception of the "theological publics," as articulated in his book *The Analogical Imagination*, offers a framework for examining the status of public theology today. He identifies three related-but distinct publics for the theologian: society, the academy and the church. These publics are more than just sociological categories; they are theological in nature. Stephen Okey, an associate professor of theology at Saint Leo's University and the

cial movements of our time, from the Special Olympics to the United Farm Workers to the antiwar and nuclear disarmament movements.

Mr. Auchincloss, who also wrote cover stories for *Time* on the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, Rabbi Louis Finkelstein and the Dead Sea Scrolls, later described his essay on Murray as "the most relentlessly intellectual cover story I've ever done."

Murray's erudition, however, did not disqualify his theology from public significance for the life of democracy in the United States. Murray worried that the U.S. political and social consensus was crumbling and that democracy would not be able to survive without it. He employed natural law to articulate a public philosophy capable of holding democracy together in a pluralistic and democratic soci-

Beyond the realm of electoral politics, Catholics have also been at the forefront of some of the most formidable political and social movements of our time. 🍷🍷

author of *A Theology of Conversation: An Introduction to David Tracy*, emphasizes Tracy's inclusion of diverse realms as sources for public theology:

Theology is a discipline of thought that responds to fundamental human questions, and essential to those in society are how we ought to live, what kind of society we ought to form, what we mean by justice, freedom or liberty. Theology responds to these kinds of questions, and people who are part of society who take theology seriously have the right to propose their questions and answers and to engage in public discussion of them.

Although religion in modernity has often been framed as a private matter, Father Tracy argues that God's universal character necessitates attention to theological concerns in each one of the publics. According to Professor Okey, each public is shaped by distinct concerns: "Tracy's approach to the publics is to understand them more in terms of the types of questions they are responding to, the types of rules they have for discussion, and what is considered evidence to them."

Professor Okey also highlights the limits of Tracy's framework: "He is really focusing on the public commitments of the theologian, and he formulates his model in the late 70's early 80's. So he wasn't thinking about mediatization, globalization, corporatization when doing so. It's not clear where those phenomena fit with respect to his pub-

lics, or whether they might propose new publics that have more or less significance for the theologian." Nonetheless, Tracy's framework offers a helpful heuristic for thinking about how the work of academic theology, grounded in a specific public with its own particular questions, rules and evidence, interacts with realms beyond its own.

Theology in and From the Academy

Evaluating the state of public theology through Father Tracy's theological framework also helps bring some problematic issues into view. While academic theology has often been the central catalyst for theological education, critics worry about the retreat of theology into the academy, where its perspective and imagination are limited by university power structures. Despite increased interest in theological education among those interested in positions in lay ministry, nonprofit work and public service, undergraduate- and graduate-level teaching in theology is calibrated toward academic research. Theologians who earn doctorates in the field are strongly encouraged to seek positions teaching in universities.

Those with positions in the university are neither incentivized nor rewarded for publishing theological works that address non-academic publics, even as those works often more effectively communicate significant advancements in theological research to readers both within and beyond the academy. The academic journals in which Murray published shy away from topics, methods and even writing styles that resonate with broader publics and their concerns.

Additionally, seismic shifts in the landscape of academic curricula and employment have forced the theological academy to grapple with its own relevance. In several cases, curricular redevelopment initiatives at Catholic universities have attempted to reduce the number of theology requirements for students. This past spring, Wheeling Jesuit University announced the elimination of its theology department entirely, opting to keep only degree programs with practical relevance. (The school's board of directors and the Society of Jesus agreed to end the university's Jesuit affiliation at the end of the 2018-19 school year.)

But there are forces beyond the job market and university restructuring that are challenging the academy's monopoly on theology. Like Murray, theologians today confront monumental challenges to the survival of American democracy. People far beyond theology departments want to know how theology speaks to the challenges we face as a church and a society. Theologians writing in the context of a democracy in crisis do not have the luxury of demurring from our public task. There is an urgent need for clear and

cogent theological voices in public life.

Identifying and empowering these voices, however, is made difficult by public theology's enduring lack of diversity. This deficit is exacerbated by the way "public" has often been read as a masculinized concept that walls it off from the private, designating public matters to men and private matters to women. Our definitions of "public" have also long held a normative view of whiteness, viewing "contextual" theologians and theological reflections as irrelevant to common concerns in the academy, the church and society alike. This conception of public still finds its way into much of our thinking about public theology, making it difficult for many Catholics to conceive of non-male theologians and those from marginalized groups doing the same work as John Courtney Murray.

"I do think that the presence of women and people of color in the public sphere is something society is still grappling with," says Natalia Imperatori-Lee, an associate professor of religious studies at Manhattan College. In 2015, Professor Imperatori-Lee provided commentary on CNN, MSNBC and a local New York City television station during Pope Francis' visit to the United States. "I was frequently the only woman in the room, and certainly the only non-Anglo person in the room. We have a ways to go to get non-white, non-male bodies seen as legitimate experts in theology."

The changing face of the Catholic Church and broader society requires acknowledgment of the significance of these theological voices to each of Father Tracy's distinct publics, recognition that many power-players—both individuals and institutions—in theology are still not ready to grant.

Even so, theologians are responding to these challenges by learning to speak, write and teach for multiple publics. For today's emerging generation of academic theologians, engagement with publics beyond the academy is just shy of compulsory. Whether in doctoral dissertations or blog posts, public talks or Twitter takes, marching for racial justice or running for public office, the new generation practices theology with keen awareness of multiple publics and the necessity of engaging questions of broader public concern.

The theological academy continues to diversify, albeit slowly and unevenly. Women are opening new space for making theological contributions to public life, speaking to topics beyond those traditionally relegated to women, like gender, motherhood and beauty, while continuing to advance conversations about those topics in authentic, honest and nuanced ways. Carmen Nanko-Fernandez, a professor of Hispanic theology and ministry at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, emphasizes the diversity of public contributions made by black, Latinx and Asian



John Courtney Murray, S.J., in an undated photo

theologians working in the United States: "Theologians from these groups exercise their public roles not only as scholars and professors but as activists, as composers of sacred music, ambassadors and diplomats, commentators and columnists in popular media, pastors and ministers at borders, and accompanying vulnerable communities."

Scholars who have been marginalized in academic theology have seized significant national and international platforms, preparing the way for generational transformations in public theological contributions.

Every so often, a list appears in print or social media naming public theologians of influence both within and beyond the academy. Lists like this make implicit arguments about who qualifies as a public theologian, asserting authority over the category by who is included on the list—and who is not. Inevitably, these lists provoke discussion, debate and disagreement. Deliberations about the specific names included on these lists help engender awareness of the breadth of public engagement among theologians in the 21st century. This is especially important for calling attention to public theologians from underrepresented groups. Nonetheless,



repeatedly defining and debating public theology’s in-crowd does not help us to understand the activities, characteristics or priorities of public theologians today. Examining these traits might help us to better understand theology’s public significance in the 21st century and the place of theologians in communicating its significance.

Public Theology Today

Auchincloss weighed in on Murray’s qualifications for the designation of public theologian: “He is particularly well fitted for this role—by intellect, by temperament and, just as important, by a life that has been largely insulated from the psycho-sociological problems of the Catholics in the U.S.” Beyond his accomplishments in academic theology, he implies, Murray was a keen observer of Catholic life while standing at a distance from its most pressing problems. This image of the theological genius coolly detached from the urgent societal issues of his time—racial, gender, sexual and economic justice, to name just a few—stands in stark contrast to the qualities associated with the work of public theology today. Public theologians of our time often speak from positions of direct experience of today’s most pressing social problems.

Theological insight and creativity is still a central expectation, of course; it is significant that the Catholic Theological Society of America’s highest award is named in honor of Murray. But accomplishment in academ-

ic theology is not sufficient for public theology today. A public theologian must know her public. As Jeremy Cruz, an assistant professor of theology and religious studies at Saint John’s University in New York explains, “They know their audience, they know what time it is, and they are connected to social movements.” This sense of timing requires attention to the lives of specific communities and specific people. For the public theologian today, this means knowing when to leave the sidelines and join the game.

Public theology today also requires an embodied commitment to solidarity. While public theology is not synonymous with prophecy, some of the most significant public theologians of our times are found not only in the halls of academe but speaking on behalf of protest movements and marginalized populations. The public theologian participates in the incarnational character of the church. If the work of the public theologian is grounded in the faith of the church, her work must guide her to be in solidarity with the publics with and for whom she writes.

While Murray demonstrated the power of theology to change public discourse on a broad scale, today’s public theologians can also be found bringing the insights of their study to the lives of particular local communities. They might still be found on the cover of *Time*, but they are more likely to be found working alongside the most vulnerable members of society, contributing their deep understanding

The theological academy continues to diversify, albeit slowly and unevenly.
Left to right: Margaret A. Farley, R.S.M., Nontando Hadebe, Shawn Copeland and Andrew Prevot at the Catholic Theological Society of America convention in 2018.

of Scripture, theology, history, ethics, liturgy and ministry in the real lives of communities.

Fame Not Required

On Aug. 12, 2017, Eric Martin's photo appeared on the front page of *The Washington Post*. That morning, he had stepped away from his research and writing on Dorothy Day, Daniel Berrigan and Elizabeth Johnson to stand among other theologians, pastors and community members to oppose the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Va. Organized by self-avowed white supremacists in protest of the city's democratic decision to remove monuments to Confederate generals from its public parks, the rally led to the murder of antiracist protester Heather Heyer and to numerous other injuries. Though a Catholic parish sits adjacent to the site of the rally, Mr. Martin was one of only a handful of Catholics to participate in the multifaith coalition, who linked arms and prayed for peace mere yards away from gun-wielding white nationalists on that day.

The Unite the Right Rally was not just another ritual performance of white supremacy. The organizers promised to bring mayhem to Charlottesville in the months preceding the event. Local elected officials, pastors and university representatives warned community members to stay at home while the storm of violence and hatred rained down on the city, battering down the hatches while praying for minimal injuries and loss of life. But avoiding the fray was not an option for the community, whose neighborhoods were engulfed by hateful anger that day.

Rally participants had already engaged in violence against Charlottesville community members at the University of Virginia the night before. And they had been to Charlottesville on several other occasions over the spring and summer months, wielding torches and shouting "blood and soil!" in the middle of the night in an act of intimidation that invoked the aesthetics of lynching. The rally was yet another campaign in a battle to claim Charlottesville's public spaces for their cause. As Jalane Schmidt, a Catholic and an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, prophesied on the eve of the rally: "Excuse me, America: your house is on fire."

Unable to leave the vulnerable of Charlottesville to cower in their homes and dorm rooms, a small group of religious leaders from Congregate C'ville—led by the Rev. Seth Wispelwey, the Rev. Brittany Caine-Conley, and the Rev. Osagyefo Sekou—engaged in acts of prayerful nonviolent

resistance, standing up to protect their vulnerable neighbors. In photographs that appeared on the pages of many major news outlets, Mr. Martin stood alongside leaders from Muslim, Jewish and Protestant religious communities in Charlottesville. While many of his fellow protesters were dressed in their clerical robes, Mr. Martin wore only a T-shirt, cargo shorts and a thin red and yellow cloth that evoked the imagery of a baptismal stole.

By embodying his theological ideals in confrontation with violent white supremacists, Martin became one of the theologians at the center of the defining political conflict of our generation. But he is skeptical of calling himself a public theologian: "I certainly don't identify as one; I only have 20 Twitter followers!" He draws a distinction between the work of theologians with wide audiences with whom he marched in Charlottesville, like Cornel West, and his own work. "I am a theologian who showed up in public," he says. Yet, by showing up on the streets of Charlottesville, Mr. Martin demonstrated the significance of theology engaged across multiple publics to our common life in the 21st century. Fame and recognition are not a requirement for theology relevant to public life.

Our society faces monumental challenges to democratic order that threaten the dignity and sanctity of human life. These challenges, presciently predicted by John Courtney Murray, summon forth theological voices in public that can speak to concrete issues in the life of democracy in the academy, the church and society at large. We do not have the luxury of cool detachment when, as Professor Schmidt noted, our house is on fire.

However one defines the role of the public theologian, there is no question of the pressing need for them—in the streets, in the classroom, in the popular and academic journals where nontheologians read their creative thoughts. Responding to our most pressing challenges requires theology to engage its publics in new, embodied, creative and faithful ways.

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Pope Francis greets a sick child near the Talitha Qum homeless shelter in Cartagena, Colombia, on Sept. 10, 2017.

The Consistent Life Ethic of Pope Francis

By Charles C. Camosy

Though many have tried to paint Francis as a “liberal” pope—not least because of his deep embrace of the consistent ethic of life—in his 2017 homily for the feast of Pentecost, he explicitly calls out commitments to either liberal or conservative Christianity as problematic. When the pope visited the United States, he declared that we must “confront every form of polarization which would divide [us] into these two camps.” Although the media often distorts his record, Francis’ actual positions follow what I call the “consistent life ethic” (hereafter C.L.E.), as do those of his predecessors, church tradition and the Gospel.

While Pope Francis has given special consideration

to what some may consider liberal (to use the problematic binary) life issues, like protecting God’s creation and welcoming undocumented immigrants and refugees, he has also spoken up strongly and clearly for the more traditional prolife issues. In short, he is quite solidly within the tradition of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI. But at the same time, his pontificate represents the leading edge of this tradition, and he uses new lenses and metaphors to speak to a new generation. In what follows I highlight what are, in my view, his two most significant contributions to the C.L.E—first, a negative: resisting the throwaway culture; second, a positive: promoting a culture of encounter.



Resisting Throwaway Culture

Pope Francis uses “throwaway culture” to name the opposite of what the C.L.E. seeks to affirm. This culture fosters “a mentality in which everything has a price, everything can be bought, everything is negotiable. This way of thinking has room only for a select few, while it discards all those who are unproductive.” Human beings have inherent, irreducible value, but when a throwaway culture finds them inconvenient, it deems them “inefficient” or “burdensome”; and they are ignored, rejected or even disposed of. In reducing the person to a mere product in a marketplace—one that can be used and then thrown away—our culture makes what philosophers call a category mistake. Persons are ends in themselves, with inherent and irreducible value, and must never be put into the category of things that can be merely discarded as so much trash.

Pope Francis resists a throwaway culture that employs violent and (often) state-sponsored practices like war, genocide, terrorism and the death penalty. But he also argues that this same violent culture includes practices like abortion (which discards a child as inconvenient) and euthanasia (which treats the elderly like “baggage” to be discarded).

But the C.L.E. is concerned not only with explicit violence, like killing, but also violence within the structure of our societies. In “Amoris Laetitia,” Francis echoes St. John Paul II that the dignity of the person “has an inherent social dimension.” That is, respecting life cannot be about simply resisting the aggressive violence of throwaway culture but also confronting the violence within its social structures. Francis insists that the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” clearly applies to our culture’s “economy of exclusion.”

The exclusion with which Francis is concerned need not be conscious exploitation and oppression. It can be unconscious practices that lead to certain people becoming “outcasts” or “leftovers.” The pope uses particularly harsh language in condemning theories of economic growth that ignore or discard human beings if they are deemed a net drag on such growth: the homeless person who dies of exposure, the child without adequate health care who dies of an easily treatable disease, island-dwelling peoples threatened by climate change. What Francis calls “a globalization of indifference” considers such people as mere afterthoughts.

A primary value in throwaway culture is maintaining a consumerist lifestyle; but to cease caring about who is being discarded, most of us must find a way to no longer acknowledge their inherent dignity. Rehumanize International, a C.L.E. activist group, has researched how this works (both historically and today) with different populations, including racial minorities, the elderly and disabled, prenatal

children, immigrants and refugees, enemy combatants and the incarcerated. Patterns develop whereby these populations have been or are named as nonpersons, subhumans, defective humans, parasites and objects, things or products.

Although technology has helped connect those who wish to be connected, it has also helped facilitate the detachment by which the throwaway culture can flourish. For instance, I can now press two buttons on my smartphone and hours later a product will arrive at my door. I have no idea who procured the materials, who assembled the product, who shipped the product, nor do I know who delivered it. I do not know how much profit the corporation that sold me the product is making. I do not know if the people involved in bringing the product to me were paid a wage fair in their social circumstances. I do not know the effect that this product’s manufacture has had on their local economies. I have little to no idea about the ecological impact associated with making this product. In short, consumer culture has detached us so totally from encounter and connection that—barring some unusual circumstance—we are not inclined to think about how we are contributing to a culture in which people are used and thrown away.

Critiquing throwaway culture, Francis insists, also means critiquing our culture’s focus on autonomy, privacy and moral relativism. In the face of a throwaway culture’s violence and injustice, it is simply not appropriate that we retreat into our private spaces and “live and let live.” When autonomy becomes our primary value, Pope Francis says that we succumb to “blind forces” of “self-interest” and “violence.” In the spaces abandoned by our appeals to autonomy, privacy and moral relativism, throwaway culture uses and discards the most vulnerable with impunity.

Promoting a Culture of Encounter

Although Pope Francis wishes that we resist throwaway culture, he is well aware that merely offering the negative message “Don’t do this” is not enough. Admonitions may convict us of our complicit role in violence and injustice and perhaps push us to seek alternatives to our current practices, but we also need a new imagination or framework for doing things differently. Francis’ positive message, the antidote to throwaway culture, is what he calls a “culture of encounter.”

Well before Francis, the C.L.E. focused on the most vulnerable by reflecting the “sheep and goats” parable in Matthew 25. Jesus insists that we have a fundamental duty to encounter him in the least among us. Every supporter of the C.L.E. is called to give particular care to those without power on the margins—to those who find it difficult or impossible to speak up on their own behalf. We owe special

Critiquing throwaway culture, Francis insists, also means critiquing our culture's focus on autonomy, privacy and moral relativism. 🍌🍌

concern for the least among us, Francis says, “no matter how troublesome or inconvenient they may be.”

Such concern, however, transcends enacting laws or donating money. While these are good and often morally essential things to do, Pope Francis summons us to go beyond them, get our hands dirty and move out of our safe spaces to the peripheries, where we can encounter the excluded and marginalized.

Contemporary consumer culture pushes us to have our experiences mediated “by screens and systems that can be turned on and off on command,” but the culture of encounter to which Francis calls us insists on a “face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction.”

In this regard the pope—like Christ himself—seems to focus particularly on children, a focus at the core of the C.L.E. Today’s most vulnerable children, the pope says, are found hiding underground to escape bombardment, on the pavements of a large city, at the bottom of a boat overladen with immigrants. Let us allow ourselves to be challenged, he says, by the children who are not allowed to be born, by those who cry because no one satisfies their hunger, by those who do have not toys in their hands but rather weapons: victims of war, abortion and poverty.

Such encounters are necessary not only for Christians, who are called to find Jesus in these relationships and be evangelized by them, but for anyone who wants to avoid the trap of deciding in advance what people need before getting to know and love them. The wealthy and privileged often determine the problems and solutions without having a single conversation with those who need the help. Not only does this disrespect the very people we are called to prioritize and honor, but its ignorant posture often gets the

proposed solutions tragically wrong.

Pope Francis also insists that we work to build a culture of encounter even if there are “no tangible and immediate benefits.” Genuine encounter requires a posture of hospitality—and such encounters will be understood as good and fitting even if there seems to be no utilitarian reason for engaging. It is an inherently good thing that people, previously strangers, encounter each other in the setting of hospitality. He insisted, for instance, that Catholic parishes house 500,000 refugees displaced by conflicts with ISIS. And who can argue with him? While it is possible that doing so involves some danger, it is shameful that countries that waged the wars that allowed ISIS to come about have not shown hospitality to the people those wars have displaced.

Significantly, taking the side of the vulnerable, as Pope Francis suggests, is not mere pacifism. Surely, if an unjust aggressor threatens the marginalized, deadly violence may be necessary to protect them. Though he does not think that individual nations should decide when such violence may be required (especially given the long history of cloaking wars of conquest under the mantle of protecting the vulnerable) he did give what some have called a “cautious yellow light” to airstrikes against ISIS. Such violence, surely, should be a last resort and must achieve a good greater than the harm that is caused—but Pope Francis does envision a C.L.E. that leaves room for rare cases in which deadly violence is necessary to defend the vulnerable.

It may be easy to judge and dismiss those we are called to encounter and support and who, therefore, are difficult to love. But this is often the reason they find themselves on the margins of our culture. This is especially important in public discourse within today’s culture. A culture of encounter, characterized by mercy for those we are tempted to judge, means being in intellectual solidarity with those who hold different opinions than we do. It means listening first, presuming goodwill and tolerating views that we find uncomfortable.

Francis provided an example of this in his opening of the controversial Synod of Bishops on the family on Oct. 3, 2015. Having heard through the grapevine that some might be afraid to speak up against the pope’s point of view, he urged his fellow bishops to offer their disagreements with him and others in honest and direct ways but always with “humility” and an “open heart.” This stands in marked contrast to much public discourse. Far too often, students and others demand “safe spaces” and that those with different points of view be marginalized. But a commitment to encounter those on the margins in the spirit of mercy means resisting these understandable impulses and, like Pope Francis, welcoming and engaging those with different points of view.

Pope Francis' culture of encounter also recognizes the mutuality of all creation. In "Laudato Si'," Francis highlights the fact that nonhuman creation belongs not to us but to God. Creation has an intrinsic value independent of human beings. In this remarkable passage, the pope connects the sufferings of human beings to the sufferings of God's other creatures:

Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power.

Francis takes nonhuman suffering so seriously that he believes even Jesus' mother makes it a priority. And who—if not deadened to their cries and detached from their dignity—can not be moved by the sufferings of elephants poached for their ivory or pigs made to live most of their lives in gestation crates? They are subject to terrible violence, the result of a consumerist culture that cannot think of them except as things to be bought and sold. Especially those in urban or suburban cultures, who are almost totally removed from the tangible reality of God's creation, struggle to establish a genuine culture of encounter between human and vulnerable nonhuman animals. But if we take the mutuality of all creation seriously, we need to face the hard truths about our relationships with other animals.

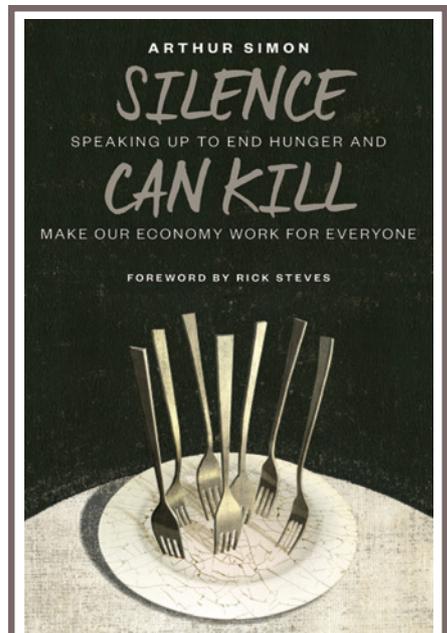
Finally, a culture of encounter asks Christians, in particular, to resist the temptation to be ruled by right-versus-left arguments over the policies of nation-states. An undue focus

on such arguments impedes authentic participation in the culture of encounter to which Pope Francis calls us. Participating in this binary political culture requires us to define ourselves by our opposition to the political "other." Furthermore, as Pope Francis says in "The Joy of the Gospel":

In her dialogue with the State and with society, the Church does not have solutions for every particular issue. Together with the various sectors of society, she supports those programs which best respond to the dignity of each person and the common good. In doing this, she proposes in a clear way the fundamental values of human life and convictions which can then find expression in political activity.

For those who disagree (at least for the moment) on politics and policy, a focus on value and convictions can provide common ground and the basis for fruitful encounters that may, down the road, lead to a different outcome.

Charles C. Camosy is an associate professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University. This essay is adapted from his new book, *Resisting a Throwaway Culture: How a Consistent Ethic of Life Can Unite a Fractured People* (New City Press).



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Aerospace Sister

By Libby Osgood

I didn't have to choose between my religious vocation and chasing satellites

Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven. I was standing in the control room at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland on June 11, 2008, with my fellow engineers and scientists, counting down the final seconds until the launch of our satellite. "Please, God," I begged. "Let this work!"

Six. Five. Four. Wearing heels and a sculpted black skirt with just a hint of pink, at 25 years of age I was the youngest person in a room filled with slacks and ties. "What am I doing here?" I marveled. "How can I be talking on a headset to Cape Canaveral?"

Three. Two. One. Lift-off. I was glued to my computer monitor, simultaneously watching the vital signs of the satellite and a live-stream video of the launch pad in

Florida. As one of the systems engineers, my role was to find and fix problems and to be a connecting point among the other engineers. I sighed in relief as smoke billowed out of the engines and the rocket disappeared from the frame. Now the real work could begin: the operations in space that the satellite was designed to perform.

Most people only hear the last 10 seconds of the countdown before a rocket launch. In reality, it lasts for hours and requires multiple days of rehearsal. The few exhilarating minutes are preceded by months of tedious work. My journey from being an aerospace engineer to a religious sister followed a similar timeline. There is no 10-second version of my vocation story. It included years of questioning and groundwork, culminating in a



unsplash

few magical minutes of clarity, followed by the actual operations, when a million yeses must be given repeatedly after the initial commitment to religious life.

Shortly after the 2008 launch, I found myself working at a NASA subcontractor in Phoenix. The pace was slower, filled with meetings and cubicles. I began to feel restless, and after two years I decided to go to Kenya with an organization called Mikinduri Children of Hope to help provide medical, dental and vision services in a small village. I was assured that even without any medical training, I would be busy; and after countless hours staring at an unmoving, metal satellite, I was eager to work with people.

I fell in love with Kenya. The countryside was lush

and green in some places; there were bright colors painted on the simple tin buildings to advertise Huggies and condoms. I saw in the Kenyan people what it means to radiate God's love. This was something I had not seen or felt in Phoenix. Before leaving Kenya, I resolved to quit my job, give up the comfortable and steadily growing salary and take a year off to seek joy.

After a year of family time, scrapbooking, yoga and road trips, I started working as an engineering professor at the University of Prince Edward Island. For six years I mentored students as they discovered engineering design, while earning my Ph.D. I returned to Kenya every February and involved my students in the trips as much as possible so they could develop their skills while help-



Though I was never discouraged from talking about religion at work or school, no one else ever did, so neither did I.

ing people who were truly in need.

I became more involved in church and was active in a new diocesan young adult group. We went to Mass, gathered for meals and debated theological issues. But I saw this Catholic side of myself as something I did on weekends. I considered my religion and my profession as two distinct parts of me, rather than an integrated whole.

In 2015, I took a weekend road trip with a few friends from my church's young adult group, including a sister of the Congregation of Notre-Dame. We spent a night in rustic cabins in Meat Cove, Nova Scotia, with no electricity or running water, surrounded by an ocean filled with whales and a sky filled with stars. Sitting on the porch, attempting to solve the problems of the world, the discussion moved onto the topic of ministry. But I had never felt like the word applied to me. When I expressed my frustration with the word, my friends looked stunned.

"Your life is a ministry," they said.

I balked: "I teach engineering, that's all."

As if seeing me for the first time, the religious sister asked, "Do you know what we do?" When I did not reply, she explained that "liberating education," the charism of the C.N.D.s, encourages sisters to empower and educate in any form that frees the human spirit.

For a few exhilarating seconds, I saw my whole life clearly integrated. I realized that I did not have to evangelize or mention God at work, as I was ministering to

my students and coworkers simply by loving them and treating them as worthy, holy individuals. We had lift-off.

The notion of liberating education and the potential promise it held for my future as a religious sister shook my whole world. After nearly two weeks of feeling intense joy, I decided this was more than just a retreat high. I appeared at the sister's door and asked her to "sell me on this nun thing." She laughed, we talked, and I walked away with answers to my questions. Nearly four years later, I am nearing the end of my novitiate and will be making my first vows this summer.

This is when the real work happens, after the exciting final seconds of the count down. In addition to prayer, classes and ministry, my chores have been atypical: fixing toilets, replacing sinks, installing floors and painting walls.

Before this, I felt ashamed both when I was at church (because I was not doing more for God's kingdom) and when I was at work (because they might think I was trying to proselytize). Though I was never discouraged from talking about religion at work or school, no one else ever did, so neither did I. When we worked around the clock in the final months before the launch of the satellite in 2008, none of the other engineers asked for time off on Sundays to attend church, so I never did either. My self-imposed censorship meant I sacrificed sleep in order to find a service during my few hours off. During my final semester as a Ph.D. student, I had to

justify why I was not presenting at the student research conference—a prerequisite for graduation. I was too embarrassed to say that I was going on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, so I mumbled, “It’s a religious thing.” Religion was such a taboo topic in the department that the issue was dropped without another word.

The void where shame once sat is now an open vessel, slowly filling with spiritually scientific pursuits, allowing me to delve into both science from a spiritual perspective and spirituality within a scientific frame. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., Ilia Delio, O.S.F., and Kathleen Deignan, C.N.D., were my first teachers in this integration and have given me a new way to sit in awe of the universe. While in the novitiate, I discovered scientists who examine their beliefs as if under a microscope, exploring how their faith informs their science and their science informs their faith. I read every book the library could offer on quantum physics, to better understand the unfolding grand design by our invisible but palpable God.

I have learned that belief is not unique to those who consider themselves religious: I believe in a God of love, and quantum physicists believe that their specific theory is true, whether string theory or quantum loop theory, though they have no concrete evidence for either.

Often, people are intrigued about the transition from working on satellites to the novitiate, but the journey has felt natural to me. I have always trusted that God has given me both the compass and the tools that I need—and sometimes a hearty shove in the right direction. As the paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin said, “God is at the tip of my pen my spade, my brush, my needle—of my heart and of my thoughts.” For me, I can now comfortably attest that God is the tip of my whiteboard marker, my space bar, my wrench, my headset—of my heart and always of my thoughts.

Libby Osgood, C.N.D., is an assistant professor of sustainable design engineering at the University of Prince Edward Island and a member of the Congregation of Notre Dame.




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Why do priests play such an important role in the fantastic worlds conjured by sci-fi writers?

Astronauts in Roman Collars

By Tom Deignan

This month, Simon & Schuster will reissue a short story collection entitled *The Toynebee Convector*, by science fiction master Ray Bradbury, best known for classics like *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles*. First published in 1988, *The Toynebee Convector* features 23 stories, among them “Bless Me, Father, for I Have Sinned,” about a priest who hears a chilling confession on a snowy Christmas Eve.

That story—as well as countless other science fiction classics published over the centuries—raises an intriguing question: Why do priests and other religious figures play such

an important role in the fantastic worlds and futuristic dystopias conjured by a wide range of sci-fi writers?

It may take decades to fully explain how and why this all happened. What we do know is that, for centuries now, science fiction has helped us grapple with our most complicated historical, political and—most definitely—spiritual questions.

These days, it is easy to understand why publishers would reissue Ray Bradbury’s books, just as it is easy to understand why CBS hired the acclaimed writer-director Jordan Peele to reboot Rod Serling’s influential TV series “The Twilight

Zone.” Bradbury (1920–2012) and Serling (1942–75) might have done their most important work decades ago. But in 2019, we are living in their world. Science fiction and its various subgenres have moved from the margins to the mainstream with cosmic force.

In May, the best-selling author Ian McEwan released his latest novel, *Machines Like Me*, about the development of a robot named Adam (!), which begins: “It was religious yearning granted hope, it was the holy grail of science.... Our ambitions ran high and low—for a creation myth made real.”

Science fiction has treated Jesuits and other religious figures with admirable complexity.

Today, some of the space travel once fantastically imagined by the likes of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells a century and a half ago has actually been achieved; so many cosmic mysteries have been solved. Yet profound existential questions remain. And sci-fi writers continue to turn to religious characters, imagery and ideas to sort things out.

A Jesuit's Odyssey

Consider the brooding Jesuit priest in “The Star,” a 1955 story by Arthur C. Clarke (1917-2008), the author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. “The Rubens engraving of Loyola seems to mock me as it hangs there above the spectrophotometer tracings,” the priest ruminates as he zooms through space. “What would you, Father, have made of this knowledge that has come into my keeping...? Would your faith have risen to the challenge, as mine has failed to do?” Another chilling twist—with another link to Christmas—awaits the reader.

It might seem as if Christianity—especially Catholics, and especially Jesuits—would be an easy target for sci-fi writers. But science fiction has also treated Jesuits and other religious figures and ideas with admirable complexity.

“On several counts, the Jesuits are ideal sci-fi/fantasy protagonists: mystical, adventurous, scientifically inclined,” Grayson Clary declared in a 2015 article

in *The Atlantic*, “Why Sci-Fi Has So Many Catholics.” The famed priest-sociologist-novelist the Rev. Andrew Greeley also suggested (in a 1991 essay collection entitled *Sacred Visions*) that aspects of Catholic theology are particularly well suited to science fiction. And the current pope, who studied chemistry in his student days, is just the latest in a long line of Jesuits who believed faith was justified—rather than contradicted—by science.

As one Jesuit character in James Blish's 1958 sci-fi novel *A Case of Conscience* puts it, advancements like “space flight” actually increased his “essential business,” what he calls “qualms of conscience.” In other words, scientific discovery meant there were more, not fewer, heavenly mysteries to explain, “new layers of labyrinths for each planet, new dimensions of labyrinths for each star.”

As far back as the 1620s, Bishop Francis Godwin of the Church of England employed Jesuits in a crucial scene of his influential *The Man in the Moon*, a particularly timely read as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Last year, meanwhile, marked the 200th anniversary of “the first seminal work to which the label [science fiction] can be logically attached,” according to the author Brian Aldiss—Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

In a pivotal scene, Dr. Frankenstein's monster asks his “accursed creator”: “Why did you form a monster so hideous that even *you* turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours.” The message is clear: For all of the intellectual advances of the En-

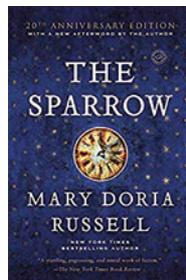
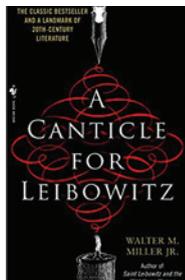
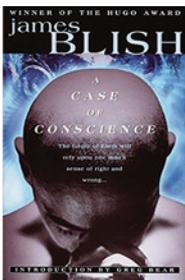
lightenment, only the divine is to be trusted with such sacred things.

More recently, the 20th century's world wars and the atomic age and the space race that ensued raised dire existential questions—ushering in a new golden age of sci-fi. Ray Bradbury's 1949 short story “The Man” explores a mission to Mars that seems to have been upended by a figure clearly representing Christ. (In another Bradbury short story, one character notes of an extinct Martian race, “They knew how to combine science and religion so the two worked side by side, neither denying the other, each enriching the other.”) And in Isaac Asimov's 1966 story “The Key,” the German Jesuit philosopher Christoph Klau (1538-1612) may hold, well, the key to a doomed mission to the moon.

In Blish's *Case of Conscience* (1958), set in 2049, Father Ramon Ruiz-Sanchez, a Peruvian Jesuit, is part of a team investigating life on Lithia, a planet inhabited by reptiles who have no religion, yet seem to live morally impeccable lives. The conflict at the heart of the book's first part is whether or not Lithians, while seemingly harmless, are nevertheless evil—even Satanic. Theological arguments ensue, which have come under fire for their casual relationship to actual Catholic and Jesuit tenets. Either way, things end a lot better for the Jesuits than they do for the Lithians.

A ‘Flame Deluge’

Then there is Walter M. Miller Jr.'s centuries-spanning *Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959), which teeters between dark humor and even darker speculations about humanity's fate. A nuclear war in the 1950s—“The Flame Deluge”—devastated life on earth. In its wake, roving mobs



Priests and religious play prominent roles in these popular works of science fiction.

(proudly called “simpletons”) destroy all things associated with knowledge, a purge referred to as “the Simplification.” (Subtlety is not Miller’s strong point.)

A Canticle for Leibowitz opens in the 26th century, when a teenaged religious brother named Francis discovers what may be a relic of Isaac Edward Leibowitz, revered—and ultimately martyred—for his efforts to preserve knowledge during The Flame Deluge.

The book’s next two sections each leap 600 years into the future, exploring the “Albertian Order of St. Leibowitz” and their valiant efforts to preserve knowledge, and humanity’s meager efforts, up to the year 3781, to avoid making the very same terrible mistakes that destroyed the planet in the 1950s. (A follow-up novel by Miller, *Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman*, was published posthumously in 1997.)

A more recent (and very timely) read about Jesuit missions of the unearthly variety is *The Sparrow*, by Mary Doria Russell. Published in 1996, Russell’s narrative spans five decades in (a future version of) the 21st century. In the summer of 2019, Father Emilio Sandoz—a Jesuit linguist—receives a phone call in the middle of the night from a friend at Puerto Rico’s Arecibo Observatory. He has come across music indicating an alien civilization light years away.

“We could go...if we wanted to?” Father Sandoz eventually suggests to a group of close friends. His travel

plan is both highly futuristic and (to many a reader) quite implausible. But Father Sandoz contends, “It wouldn’t be any worse than the little wooden ships people used to cross the Atlantic in the 1500s.”

Father Sandoz persuades his Jesuit superiors to fund a journey to the planet Rakhat. Upon arrival, the travelers interact with an alien species known as the Runa, but as the humans increasingly adapt Rakhat to their needs, a series of developments brings them into contact with a more aggressive species, the Jana’ata. The novel’s gruesome conclusion raises profound questions—particularly pointed given centuries of Jesuit globetrotting—about the consequences of exploration and the unexpected outcomes of attempts at evangelization.

At the center of *The Sparrow*, the title of which refers to a passage in Matthew about God’s love for even the most humble creatures, is Father Sandoz’s struggle to maintain faith in a world that can be miraculous but also barbaric. “So many dead,” Father Sandoz laments, “because I believed.”

But when another Jesuit then expresses similar doubts about God (“You’re on your own, apes. Good luck!”), there is a more hopeful retort: “[God] watches. He rejoices. He weeps. He observes the drama of human life and gives meaning to it by caring passionately about us, and remembering.”

Father Sandoz returned in Russell’s sequel, *Children of God*, leaving

the priesthood, falling in love and pondering another fateful trip to Rakhat.

Bad Theology?

For all of the penetrating questions posed by postwar theological sci-fi, it also has its critics. Guy Consolmagno, S.J., the director of the Vatican Observatory, told *The Atlantic*’s Grayson Clary that many of these “stories...[were] written by people who don’t have intimate knowledge of scientists in general, and certainly not of Jesuits.”

Brother Consolmagno adds: “The Arthur Clarke story, ‘The Star,’ you just scratch your head and go, ‘What is he thinking of?’ You look at *A Case of Conscience* and [its] theology isn’t only bad theology, it’s not Jesuit theology.” And *The Sparrow*? “[It] drives me nuts,” he says bluntly.

Clary adds, “At times, these stories seem like fantasies of degradation, part of a longstanding tradition of wishing bad things on Jesuits.”

Fair enough. Still, at a time of such open disdain in certain (especially bookish) quarters for religious matters in general—and Catholicism in particular—perhaps we should also not overlook the value of these generally sympathetic depictions of spiritual people, struggling openly and honestly with sex and love, faith and mortality, not to mention an alien race or two.

During the first two decades of the 21st century, sci-fi has followed

the broader culture's interrogation of the power dynamics surrounding race, gender and sexual orientation. This might suggest a dim future for theological science fiction. Consider the 2013 movie "Ender's Game," adapted from Orson Scott Card's 1985 novel. In a passionately argued essay in *Forbes*, Jerry Bowyer lamented that "Religious themes abound in the novel," but "almost none of that material is in the movie."

To Bowyer, "modern Hollywood" has no interest in telling stories about how "God, through the individual human spirit, can resist" tyranny. But we should not exaggerate literary or show-biz hostility toward religion.

Michel Faber's 2014 novel *Book of Strange New Things* was merely the latest entry in the sturdy "Holy Man in Space" tradition, chronicling English pastor Peter Leigh's missionary adventures on the planet Oasis. And in the past decade, Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and Tom Perrotta's *The Leftovers* have all been adapted for the screen. Amazon is also turning Naomi Alderman's best-seller *The Power* into a series. Each in their own frustrating but also fascinating ways probes religious fervor, tradition, rules and mystery.

In the end, novels like *The Sparrow* and those mentioned above suggest that for all of our accumulated earthly knowledge, sci-fi writers still yearn for some divine link to "an all-powerful Force" to help penetrate the universe's ever-evolving "layers of labyrinths," its persistent "qualms of conscience."

At one point in *The Sparrow*, a character asks Father Sandoz: "Do you mean a mission or do you mean a mission? Are we talking science or religion?"

The Jesuit gives what may be the only possible answer.

"Yes."

Tom Deignan, a regular contributor to *America*, has written about books and history for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *National Catholic Reporter*.

Ghost Sounds

By Robert Jackson

Sounds die,
the *whoosh* of a Steller's sea cow's breath
erased a few decades after discovery, the echo-
locational *click* of baiji river dolphins,
each *coo* and *cluck* of passenger pigeons
in flocks so thick they snapped branches.

Sounds haunt audio wax museums.
The *kent* and rap-tap double knocks of ivory
bill woodpeckers survive in recordings
from one forest tract in Louisiana.
Would a piano be whole if it lost a key,
an orchestra complete if eight measures of tympani
were all that endured,
sampled repeatedly in hopes a cryptic bird rejoins?

Come on. Come on. Come on, now. Come on.

Scanning bare trees at dawn
I tap the rhythm of waves lapping the shore,
touch my brother's gravestone at Ouvry,
silent, incomplete, because I never knew him,
never heard the sound of his voice.

Robert Jackson is a Guggenheim fellow and has published poems in *Southwest Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Cortland Review*, *LitHub* and many other outlets. He chairs Stanford's Earth System Science Department.

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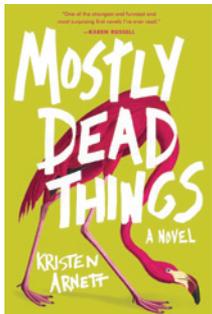


INSTITUTE
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LEADERSHIP

Life and death in the animal kingdom

By Zac Davis

unsplash



Mostly Dead Things

By Kristen Arnett
Tin House Books
354p \$24.95

“The economy of animals can only be studied when the functions of life are in full activity” is how British zoologist William Swainson opened his *Treatise on Taxidermy*, published in 1840. “But in order to acquire a more accurate knowledge of their external form, and to investigate their internal structure, it is absolutely necessary to examine them in a dead state.”

Is this not also why we read and write fiction? While we suspend our disbelief long enough to fall for the illusion that characters are dynamic and making choices in the present, they are in fact dead on the page, their course of action predetermined by a taxidermist with a pen. Yet by examining characters “in a dead state,” we

are able to investigate their, and our, internal structures.

A search for the term “taxidermied” on eBay yields over 25,000 results. You could own your very own stuffed coyote for only \$320. Or less if you make the best offer. Looking for a gag gift? Anthropomorphized squirrels who hunt, canoe, fish and drink beer are a popular choice.

While taxidermy’s popularity as a profession fell off following World War I, it is experiencing a renaissance among a new generation. Matt Blitz, writing in *Smithsonian* magazine in 2015, speculated that taxidermy served as a tactile encounter with the real for a generation whose experience of the world had glazed over from screens and social media.

The fragile space between life and death evokes the most profound stories any culture produces. (For my money, the best television show so far in this millennium was HBO’s “Six Feet Under,” a series about a family-run funeral home.) I assumed that this general rule extends at least in part to the rest of the animal kingdom.

And so I could not wait to get my hands on Kristen Arnett’s debut novel, *Mostly Dead Things*, after hearing its premise: a working-class Florida family of taxidermists reeling from the suicide of their father. Inevitably all great stories deal in death to some degree, but a project that promises to include it as a central character makes a risky, high-stakes promise to the reader.

With *Mostly Dead Things*, Arnett more than delivers on that promise. More than about death, it is also a novel about intimacy and wanting what is forbidden, about childhood and family, about absent parents and absent lovers, and about the secondhand self-destruction that can be wrought by ignoring cries of the heart.

The novel opens with Jessa-Lynn Morton wandering into her family’s taxidermy shop late one night to find not a pheasant or fox or hawk cut open on the worktable, but her dead father—who has left behind a pistol and an apologetic suicide note for only Jessa-Lynn to read.

Arnett does not dwell long on the great tragedy of the opening scene,

at least not at first. The book is filled with dark humor—including the book's bright pink cover, which elicits a "What are you reading?" from close acquaintances and strangers alike, who are either delighted or politely disturbed upon hearing a quick summary.

We quickly learn that Jessa-Lynn Morton's life holds a great number of challenges apart from her grief over a father lost to suicide. She is left to run the family business, beset by tall stacks of bills and fewer and fewer customers. Her brother takes more sick days than anyone could possibly have banked, yet he is not at home raising his daughter.

The plot finds urgency (but not too much) in the tension between Jessa-Lynn and her mother, who has found inspiration in her grief, taking up an artistic practice that involves arranging her deceased husband's prized taxidermied animals in sexually explicit compositions. Jessa-Lynn is in equal parts embarrassed by and ashamed of her mother's newfound passion for erotic diorama, for both its lewdness and the implication that Jessa-Lynn is not able to deal with her own grief.

Every other chapter brings a scene from Jessa-Lynn's past, which achieves the double effect of adding depth and drama to the characters as well as exposing the straitjacket on Jessa-Lynn's emotional capacity. The suffocating tyranny of memory slipping into nostalgia tortures her. As she describes it, "Nostalgia carved out my insides, padding my bones until my limbs stuck, splayed. Frozen in time, refusing to live." The reader encounters a confessional, brief breaking of

the fourth wall near the end of the novel, even after Jessa-Lynn breaks free from the chains of her past life. It is framed as "one last, good memory," signaling a self-awareness and a loss of self-control that anyone who has been trapped in the memory of a former life or lover can relate to.

The locus of Jessa-Lynn's memories is her childhood best friend, Brynn, with whom Jessa-Lynn discovered her sexuality and fell in love, but who then went on to marry Jessa-Lynn's brother, Milo. Jessa-Lynn languishes in her memories because it is the only way she can have Brynn, who later ran off without warning and without looking back, leaving her children and the rest of the Morton family behind with broken hearts and a Florida-sized sense of abandonment. If the Mortons are not comfortable talking about their father's death, processing the wound left by the siblings' shared partner remains the final, distant emotional frontier.

"A good way to think about taxidermy is to imagine you're God," Arnett wrote last year in an essay for *Hazlitt*. "Take the dead thing and resurrect it. Shape it in your own image."

Despite that conviction, God and religion are largely absent in the novel. But Arnett, who was raised in an evangelical home, writes in her *Hazlitt* essay that she knows "all about mortification of the flesh, the zombie special-feature of a body rising from the dead, the marvel of the reanimated holy corpse." And religious sensibilities manage to find their way into this story, in the resurrection of intimacy and love of characters who had sworn off it for good.

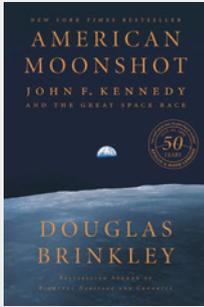
The most powerful moments in the novel are not in the recountings of lost hurt (of which there are perhaps one or two too many) but in the intimate, sacramental encounters between wounded and estranged family members.

"I don't need closure. I've got closure!" Jessa-Lynn's brother unconvincingly bellows at the book's climax, slapping an old glass case and filling his hand with shards of glass. Jessa-Lynn takes out the shards from her brother's hand, mingling her blood with his to heal him. The intimacy is a conduit for emotional healing, and closure gives way to real reconciliation.

Mostly Dead Things is about learning to live with—and not just tolerate or ignore—the worst things we have done, and have had done to us. "How can we be that terrible and still worthy of love?" the Mortons ask themselves, joining a chorus of theologians across millennia.

While it is tempting to think of God as a taxidermist (or a novelist), the divine work is not so much rearranging our dead limbs as it is staring unflinchingly at wounds, getting hands bloody and pulling out the broken shards.

Zac Davis is an associate editor for digital strategy at *America* and a host of the podcast "*Jesuitical*."



American Moonshot

John F. Kennedy
and The Great
Space Race

By Douglas Brinkley
Harper
548p \$35

Sailing on a new sea

“We choose to go to the moon...” Even after 57 years, those words that President John F. Kennedy spoke at Rice University in Houston, Tex., extolling the benefits of space exploration, still excite the imagination and provoke wonder at the audacity of it all. This summer will mark the 50th anniversary of that historic moment when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Sea of Tranquility and spoke the immortal words that were etched into the memories of everyone who watched television on that July evening in 1969.

The culmination of President Kennedy’s vision, the lunar landing (which he sadly did not live to witness) was the seminal event of a decade that began with promise and ended with sorrow, including assassinations, wars and social upheaval. *American Moonshot* is Douglas Brinkley’s exciting narrative of how it all came to pass.

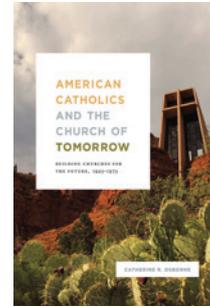
As Brinkley recounts, he was just an 8-year-old in Ohio when his fellow Ohioan, Neil Armstrong, made his “giant leap.” The Saturn V era fascinated many of Brinkley’s generation. That feat was essentially an American one, for it embodied that quintessential characteristic that is

ingrained in our psyche and that we invested in the astronauts: the thrill of adventure. J.F.K. put his finger on it when he said that it would take the skills and talents of all Americans to put them “there,” on the moon—for it was the work of us all.

From the start, Brinkley posits that *Moonshot* is actually the story of Kennedy’s own space race and the space race’s influence on Kennedy’s vision. It is ironic that J.F.K. is so closely linked to Apollo history, given that early on, he was something of a “space skeptic”; like many others, he wondered if the resources could have been put to better use in other fields. He slowly came to realize, though, that the space program could have unforeseen positive consequences, economically, scientifically, socially—and *politically*, given the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. It appealed to Kennedy’s idealistic, historical and, frankly, romantic nature because it was a challenge to be met, one that could be used for the benefit of mankind and for peace. Applying the nautical images he so loved, he viewed it as a “new sea” on which to set sail.

Douglas Brinkley’s fascination with this subject shows on every page. Part biography, part history, it is all pure adventure, something we need to be reminded of in a time when the “can do” spirit in our country and world is sorely lacking and much needed.

Joseph McAuley, *assistant editor*.



American Catholics and the Church of Tomorrow

Building Churches
for the Future,
1925-1975

By Catherine R.
Osborne
University of Chicago
Press
288p \$45

Tomorrowland

Anyone who has spent time in a Catholic church of any architectural style has probably heard someone complain about that architecture and its inadequacy. In recent years, amid the rise of self-styled traditionalist Catholicism, modernist churches of the mid-20th century have disproportionately been the target of these complaints.

The deeply modern parish of my youth, St. Ann of Normandy in St. Louis, is pictured in Catherine R. Osborne’s new book, and other readers also may find aesthetic debates about their own spiritual homes among the historical examples here. In this regard, Osborne’s book accomplishes something notable by illuminating the reader’s own experience through the presentation of her scholarly research.

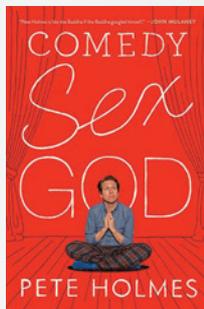
This study of changing tastes in the construction of American Catholic churches between 1925 and 1975 works between the hyper-specific and the broadly significant by helping readers locate the patterns of thought beneath aesthetic disputes about Catholic places of worship. The book’s earlier chapters focus on the ways in which a rapidly professionalizing and modernist class of architects worked to wrest creative authority away from

a hopelessly Tridentine, even medieval-minded clerical establishment. Osborne succinctly and compellingly shares the fruits of her research into many subjects, including architectural modeling and the history of concrete, undeniably important developments that probably do not always register with most readers.

The second half of the book concerns itself with headier matters, and Osborne offers a window into the book's major premise when she states that "in the debates over the design and location of liturgical space in the 1960s, the wide-ranging eschatology of Teilhard, Cox, and Vatican II came home," noting that these deeply theological questions became "the framework within which Catholics debated the minutiae of folding walls, new carpets, portable furniture, and laypeople's distance from the altar."

Osborne's examination of how future-oriented Catholics adopted "the biological paradigm," replacing the idea of a timeless and unchanging church with an evolutionary ideal that prioritized change, growth and adaptation in all things, including architecture, offers a window into the questions that continue to motivate Catholic debate in the 21st century. Readers may feel somewhat disoriented at times, as Osborne draws from a seemingly bottomless archival well. But anyone who stays current with the ongoing Catholic public discourse should find enough recognizable material here.

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Comedy, Sex, God
By Pete Holmes
HarperWave
320p \$27.99

From comedy to mystery

The renaissance funny-man Pete Holmes churns out breathtaking stand-up, wrote an autobiographical HBO show and hosts the popular podcast "You Made It Weird." His work stands out easily in the crowded content field because of its electric sense of wonder. The holy curiosity that saturates his work is highly contagious.

Comedy, Sex, God is no exception. From the first pages, Holmes pulls us into the core question of his curiosity: "What is this?" What is the uncanny world—a sky of stars hanging above our heads, bodies made up of improbable cells, flowers of every color imaginable—that we all mindlessly take for granted? This unquenchable curiosity was Holmes's primordial religion, and church was the first space he discovered that honored that impulse.

Holmes peppers Sanskrit words throughout his memoir of spiritual awakening—his pilgrim's progress away from fundamentalism to a more fundamental light—so I'll offer an addition to his lexicon: *adbhuta*, meaning wonder, curiosity, amazement at the beauty of the world around you.

Holmes's memoir is poignant and heartfelt, much like his stand-up

comedy, and reads as if the reader is third-wheeling his running conversations with the people who share in and stoke his curiosity: Ram Dass, Duncan Trussell, Kumail Nanjiani and Joseph Campbell.

At the heart of Holmes's spiritual awakening is the discovery that God is mystery. The answer to "What is this?" is ultimately "luminous darkness." Holmes discovers a new meaning to Christ's words "Go and do likewise," not as a moralistic command but as a call to an awakening, a conversion, the practice Catholic tradition calls the "imitation of Christ."

"God is mystery" might be a cliché of Catholic catechesis, but Holmes, characteristically, depicts this theological truism through a fresh lens of wonder.

Richard Rohr, O.F.M., hails Holmes as a new Thomas Merton. A review of Merton's corpus reveals stylings and concerns like Holmes's: the false self versus the true self, contemplation, receiving reality versus grasping it through our intellect.

But Holmes's book most reminds me of the oft-quoted dictum ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa, a theologian who describes the climax of what Holmes would call the adventure of faith as a dazzling darkness. "Concepts create idols," writes Gregory, "only wonder understands anything." By Gregory's standards, Holmes, it seems, understands a great deal.

Renée Darline Roden is a writer and playwright in New York City.

Bruce Springsteen looks for deliverance in 'Western Stars'

By Bill McGarvey

Springsteen's new album marks his return to the studied pop formalism of his youth.

In his speech inducting Roy Orbison into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, Bruce Springsteen confessed that the grand vision behind his breakthrough album “Born to Run” was to sing like Orbison with lyrics like Bob Dylan’s and a production worthy of Phil Spector’s wall of sound. The result was a tour de force in which Springsteen pulled out every tool in his toolbox to prove he wasn’t just another “new Dylan.” It defined him as an artist with enormous ambition, deep knowledge of his craft and a religious devotion to the salvific power of rock and roll.

“Born to Run” thrust him onto the world stage, but for Springsteen—rock’s most ambivalent and self-doubting superstar—it was also disorienting. His subsequent records traded the lush romanticism of “Born to Run” for a stripped-down sound, as if his elevation into the firmament had exposed how insubstantial pop music’s promises actually were and he

needed to ground his music in something more direct and real.

It is against this backdrop that Springsteen’s newest release, “Western Stars,” is best considered. It marks his full return to that studied pop formalism of his youth. Springsteen began dipping his toes back into these waters over 10 years ago with songs like “Girls in their Summer Clothes” and “Your Own Worst Enemy,” lavishly produced songs with an obvious debt to the chamber pop romanticism of the Beach Boys’ “Pet Sounds.” It was as if Springsteen realized that the fact that something is a beautiful confection doesn’t necessarily make it false or insubstantial. Pop ornamentation didn’t undermine his songs; they were simply enhanced in a different way.

For “Western Stars,” Springsteen has created a sprawling sonic landscape that, in its best moments, feels like the soundtrack to a film you would love to see. At its weakest moments, it is like a movie by a beloved director who

seems trapped by themes explored more convincingly in earlier works.

The artists who influence “Western Stars”—the songwriters Jimmy Webb and Burt Bacharach, the artists Glen Campbell and Harry Nilsson—created indelible Southern California AM radio pop hits in the late ’60s that have lived on as miniature Americana movies for the ears. Campbell’s versions of Webb’s “By the Time I Get to Phoenix” and “Wichita Lineman” in particular, have the DNA of John Ford’s classic western films—a Springsteen touchstone—coursing through them.

Nilsson and Bacharach notched their biggest successes around the same time with songs for films: “Everybody’s Talkin’” (“Midnight Cowboy”) and “Raindrops Keep Fallin’ on My Head” (“Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid”).

Webb and Bacharach are masters at distilling distinct brands of sophisticated sadness. There’s an elegant aloneness in their finely wrought pop gems.

Springsteen usually eschews that elegance for a far more existential aloneness, but with “Western Stars” the load seems lighter somehow.

“Had enough of heartbreak and pain,” he sings in “Hello Sunshine.” “I had a little sweet spot for the rain/ For the rain and skies of grey/ Hello sunshine, won’t you stay?”

Given Springsteen’s struggles with serious depression, this song, along with the album’s other high points—“There Goes My Miracle” and the redemptive “Tucson Train”—feel like meditations on alienation and prayers for deliverance. The characters from his stark and masterful “Nebraska” (1982) look up into a sky that is blank and unforgiving; in “Western Stars” that same sky may be blank but it is not without mercy.

It is difficult not to wonder what “Western Stars” might have been if Springsteen had paired up with Bacharach to see what his deft melodies and chords could yield. It is even more tantalizing to imagine what a song co-written by Springsteen and Webb might sound like.

Billy Joel once described Webb’s masterful “Wichita Lineman” as “a simple song about an ordinary man thinking extraordinary thoughts.” “That got to me,” Webb told an interviewer. “It actually brought tears to my eyes. I had never really told anybody how close to the truth that was.”

Simple lives imbued with profound depth have been Springsteen’s stock in trade—his North Star—for decades. “Western Stars” sets his new course in a promising direction. I just wonder how much farther he could have gone with some additional traveling companions.

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

Space age architecture

In March, Hudson Yards—the most expensive real estate development in the United States—opened its doors. It is a cluster of glass skyscrapers on Manhattan’s West Side that, along with One World Trade Center, are reshaping the New York City skyline. At the center of the residential and commercial complex are two much-anticipated constructions influenced by the space age aesthetic popularized in the mid-20th century.

First is the Shed, a new cultural center with over 170,000 square feet of floor space dedicated to visual and performing arts. The building has an enormous moveable outer shell that can roll away on massive wheels within 15 minutes. The design reminds me of Wall-E or the Mars Rover. Although impressive, the kinetic shell is an architectural gimmick, in which form triumphs over function.

The Shed’s next-door neighbor is the crown jewel of Hudson Yards: the Vessel. What is this exactly? Part sculpture, part landmark and part never-ending staircase, it is unclear what purpose the structure plays in the public sphere.

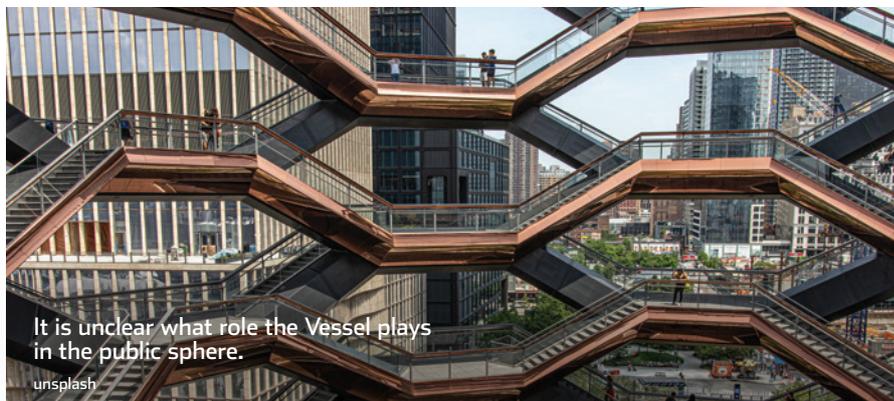
I view it as a monument to late capitalism. To get to the structure, I walk past “The Shops.” These are not mom-and-pop storefronts, as the name might suggest, but glass expanses showcasing the most prized desires of the superwealthy: Louis Vuitton,

Rolex and Cartier. The exterior is clad in bronze, the high-sheen, reflective, mirror-like quality reminiscent of Chicago’s hugely popular Cloud Gate sculpture, more widely known as “The Bean.” Mirrors often invoke contemplation: Who am I, and what am I doing here? They also make superb backdrops for selfies. This is liminal space in the age of social media.

The criss-crossed, lattice-like staircases create a winding route to the top. As visitors to this inverted panopticon, here we exist both to see and be seen: the watcher and the watched. The *self* in selfie becomes commodified as we broadcast these images on social media. We are the consumer and the consumed. Climbing aimlessly up and down staircases, we repeatedly check the view count on our Instagram story or the number of likes on our post. It’s never enough; there is always more to be had—a vicious cycle like unrestrained capitalism itself.

The effect is chillingly dystopian. It makes one wonder: Is this what 21st-century architecture has in store for us? Fortunately, there are alternatives, even just steps away. Skip the Vessel and go straight past the Shed about 100 yards and you will find the edge of the High Line, a New York attraction that lives up to the hype.

Ciaran Freeman, *Joseph A. O’Hare fellow*.



It is unclear what role the Vessel plays in the public sphere.

unsplash

The Door Will Be Opened

Readings: Gn 18:20-32, Ps 138, Col 2:12-14, Lk 11:1-13

In his book *The Screwtape Letters*, near the end of the first letter, C. S. Lewis talks about the soul-deadening power of “real life.” The familiar experiences of our lives create a kind of hard shell around our awareness. As our lives draw on, it becomes increasingly difficult to believe any perception or intuition that draws our mind beyond its everyday expectations. We become conditioned to the set of experiences that we call “real life,” and we treat everything else as illusion or magic or childish fantasy. The tiny world we can create for ourselves can be quite comfortable, because nothing unusual ever happens in it. We can even start to imagine that this tiny world is completely under our control. This comfort comes at a high price, since it closes our minds to divine creativity and to the power that God is always ready to share.

In his teachings on prayer, Jesus shows his disciples how to break through this illusion and encounter divine grace. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus offers these teachings during his journey to Jerusalem. This is especially apt, because it is during this time that he prepares his disciples for their own ministry. Luke presents a version of the Lord’s Prayer as a summary introduction to everything Jesus wanted his disciples to know about prayer.

The first line of the prayer facilitates the “break-through.” The Father is so holy that even his name is sacred. For many first-century Jews, holiness was a paradox, implying both separation and nearness. A prime example appears in Ex 40:34-38, in which God, in fire and cloud, takes up residence at the very center of the Israelite camp. God remains an awesome and disruptive mystery, nearby and always at work, but never a part of the human world with its violence and self-interest. Those who call on the Lord’s holy name draw near to this same mystery.

The second petition turns one outward from this mystery to the world. “Your kingdom come” is a poignant prayer. In effect, we beg the Father that the world around us not be the final story, that flashes of love and grace foreshadow a joyful end to the human drama. Jesus caught sight

“If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

(Lk 11:13)



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

What “real life” do you need to break out of?

What grace can you ask of the Lord for mission?

of this beauty because his awareness of God’s holiness never wavered; just so, his disciples must ground themselves in God’s holy name before they can understand the world as a place for God’s kingdom.

Only then do we ask for what we need—a day’s bread, forgiveness, deliverance. In Jesus’ own experience, God provided these things in abundance. When a disciple prays as Jesus taught, “real life” melts away. A stingy world, which offers its benefits only in response to great effort and often capriciously, yields to the reign of God, who is more generous than the best of friends or the most loving of parents.

To pray as Jesus did draws our attention to the subtle evidence of God’s kingdom taking shape. With such prayer, Christ prepares us, as he did the first disciples, to continue his ministry of salvation.

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Life's Mission

Readings: Eccl 1:2–2:23, Ps 90, Col 3:1–11, Lk 12:13–21

When I was in college, a fellow student came to class one day wearing a shirt that read, “The one who dies with the most toys wins!” Although the saying was an ironic comment on the excesses of the 1980s, it bespeaks a perennial human problem. In every age, greed—the inordinate desire to accumulate wealth or possessions—is a temptation many struggle to resist.

Warnings against greed appeared in many first-century texts. The non-Christian writer Plutarch warns against the vice that never lets individuals rest, driving them to acquire ever more without satisfaction (*Moralia* 525 E). Mark’s Gospel and Paul’s letters list greed among deadly vices (Mk 7:22, Rom 1:29; Eph 4:19; 5:3). The noncanonical Gospel of Thomas shares the same parable found in this Sunday’s Gospel reading, pointing out the way death makes a mockery out of human schemes (Thomas 63). Matthew, meanwhile, emphasizes the value of heavenly treasure by contrasting it with the transitory nature of material possessions. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay

destroy, and thieves break in and steal” (Mt 6:19).

Luke takes a different approach and warns against confusing wealth with life. “Though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Luke recognizes that wealth has a symbolic value. Material goods represent our time, hard work, talents and dreams. They can provide illusions of present control and future security. An increase in possessions can coincide with advances in education or personal development. These make it easy to regard material possessions as a concrete expression of one’s life or, even worse, as its source and purpose.

Greed is not limited to wealth. It can take the form of the accumulation of anything unnecessary. For example, greed for power is almost as common as greed for wealth, and people can also be greedy for things like social connections or experiences. In each case, the thing desired becomes a counterfeit of life itself.

Jesus urges his followers not to make that mistake. God alone is the source and purpose of life. Food, shelter and clothing support life, and a prudent reserve of resources can ease anxieties about the future. But the basis of life and peace is not the wealth itself but God, who provided it.

Luke locates this teaching in his Gospel narrative during Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem, a time during which he often taught the conditions for discipleship. Just as earlier Jesus had taught that home, family and good name should not distract one’s discipleship (9:23–24, 57–62), so now he teaches that the acquisition of material possessions must never take the place of the divine mission to which God calls each disciple. The purpose of life is to become like Christ, and true wealth consists of the everyday decisions that make us resemble him. A disciple’s treasure is every act of forgiveness, generosity and kindness, and every deed that confers healing or deliverance or peace. Those who accumulate these treasures have discovered the true purpose of the life God has given.

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*‘Take care to guard against all greed; one’s life does not consist of possessions.’
(Lk 12:15)*

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

On what do you spend your energy?

What are your “barns”?

What are your personal obsessions that distract you from God’s intent for your life?

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The Unlikely Theory

The Big Bang isn't what we think it is

By Paul Sutter



What is the Big Bang? If you think it is something like an explosion that started the universe, then you would be in the same boat as most people. As far as I can tell (and I have done a lot of asking around because it is kind of my job as an astrophysicist who communicates to audiences in all sorts of venues and media), that is about as close to the most common public perception of the Big Bang as you can get.

If you do think of the Big Bang like that, I do not want you to take this personally, but just about every word in that description is dead wrong.

Why are there so many misconceptions about the Big Bang? There are likely several reasons, but the most likely culprit is simple cultural patterns. Many people grow up learning or hearing about this particular version of the theory and spend most of their lives not needing to fact-check it. And if they do, any reference is likely to be chock full of nearly-incomprehensible jargon, so the original notions stick.

I am highlighting the Big Bang because, to me, it perfectly encapsulates a breakdown in communication between scientists and the public.

The Big Bang is not a theory of the origins of the universe. I will say it again just to be clear: The Big Bang is not a theory of the origins of the universe. In fact, we have no scientific

theory of the origins of the universe.

The Big Bang is a model of the early history of the universe based on abundant observations. The simplest and most powerful observation was made in the 1920s and revealed that galaxies are, on average, flying away from us and from each other. So over time, the distance between galaxies grows larger. This means that in the past (and I am sure you can follow my logic here), the galaxies were closer together. And in the distant past, they were all really smooshed together. And in the extremely distant past, they were really, really smooshed together.

The general theme is that in the past, our universe was smaller and hotter and denser, and in the future, it will be larger and colder and less dense.

That is the Big Bang. Seriously, that is it. I mean, of course, there are a lot of details in that story to flesh out and a lot more observations to back up those details, but that is the Big Bang in a nutshell.

Ultimately, science is a story of evidence. Scientists build mathematical models based on our observations to describe and understand the natural world around us. This construct naturally places a barrier between science and the public (since science is performed in a rather unnatural language for most people), but that is still about as neutral an activity as you can get. Sometimes the scientific pro-

cess may produce statements that are in conflict with personal beliefs. Even the more refined understanding of the Big Bang outlined above may cause you a little bit of internal friction. That is fine. Science will just keep on doing its thing.

There are many scientists with deeply held religious views, of all sorts of faiths. There are also a bunch of atheists running around in scientific circles. They all seem to be able to sleep soundly at night, and they all seem to have come to a personal reconciliation of their faith with their work. As best as I can tell, when it comes to the relationship between science and faith and any possible friction you might encounter, it's nothing personal.

*Paul Sutter is an astrophysicist at The Ohio State University, host of the podcast and YouTube series "Ask a Spaceman" and author of *Your Place in the Universe*.*

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