

America

SEPTEMBER 3, 2018

CRITIC REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

2018 CPA MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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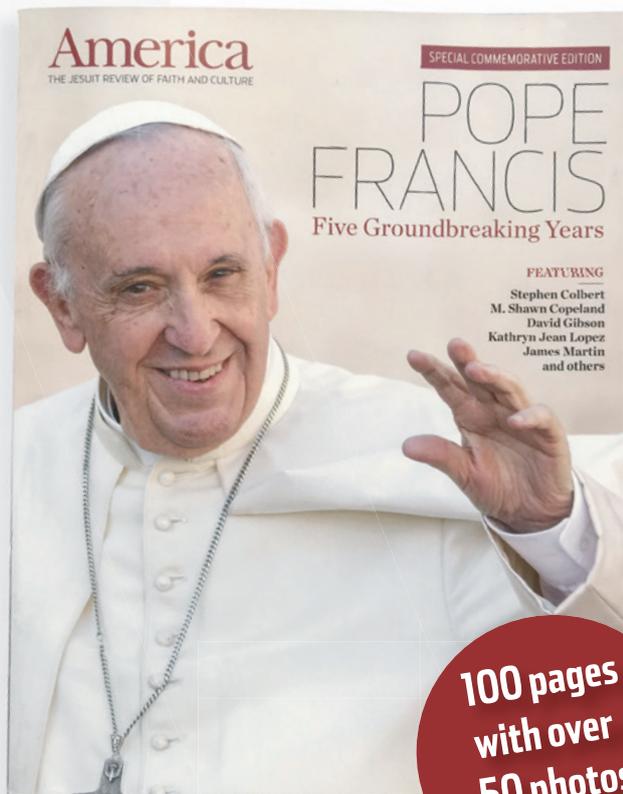
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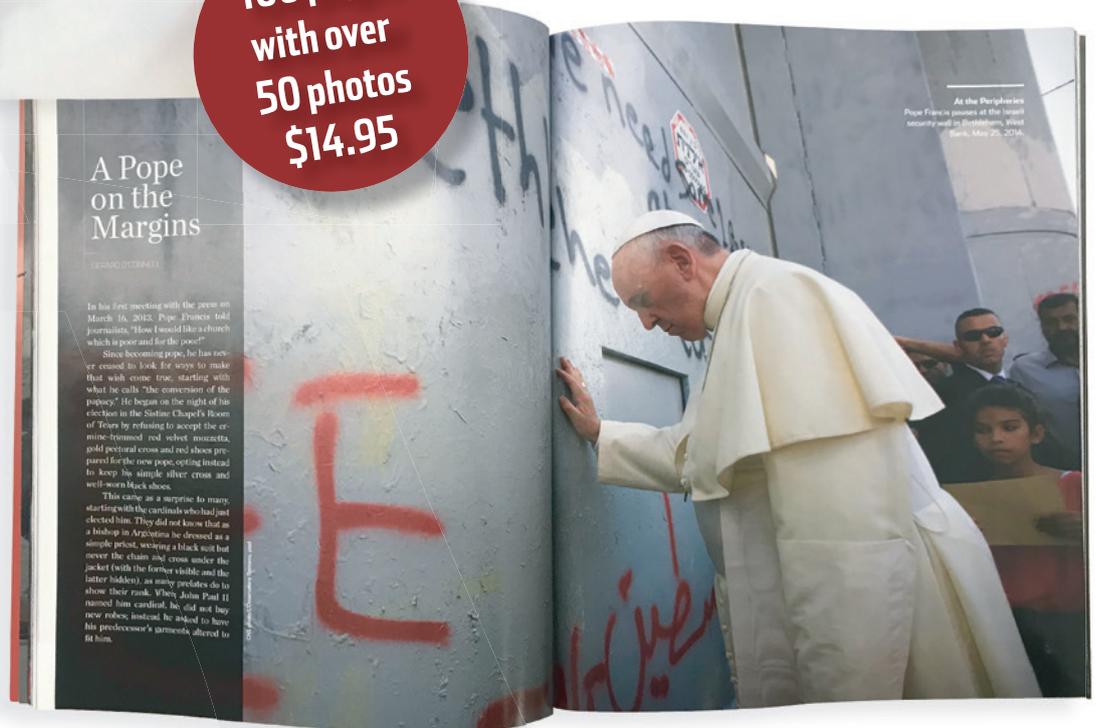




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It's Worse Than We Think

Like you, I was disgusted by the Pennsylvania grand jury report on sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, released on Tuesday, Aug. 14. Unlike you, perhaps, I read the whole report, mainly because my job required it—every excruciating account of sexual abuse by 301 priests across six dioceses, with more than 1,000 victims. The fact that most of these events took place more than 25 years ago, over a period of seven decades, provided little comfort. News is simply information that you haven't heard before—it does not matter much whether it happened yesterday or a century ago.

Like you, I experienced a range of emotions—anger, sorrow, sadness. Above all, fear. There is the fear of what is to come. The grand jury report covered only six dioceses of the nearly 200 Catholic dioceses in the United States. Surely the news will only get worse as more dioceses release their records. They should do so at once. Such disclosures, as the editors write in this issue, “should be anticipated and embraced, not resisted until they are imposed” by civil authorities. “One of the few remaining ways that the church can offer mercy to survivors of sexual abuse,” they continue, “is to demonstrate through such voluntary disclosures that we value the sacred dignity of the victims more than the church's reputation and security.”

Yet as painful as that necessary process of disclosure will be, there is something that terrifies me even more, an ominous question that has kept me tossing and turning for much of the week: If things are this bad within the church, how bad is it in our homes and neighborhoods? This is not

“what about-ism.” By asking this question I do not seek to deflect attention in any way from the church's abysmal failures or the objectively evil acts of the abusers in its ranks. The problem within the church is bad. The problem in our families and in our neighborhoods is even worse.

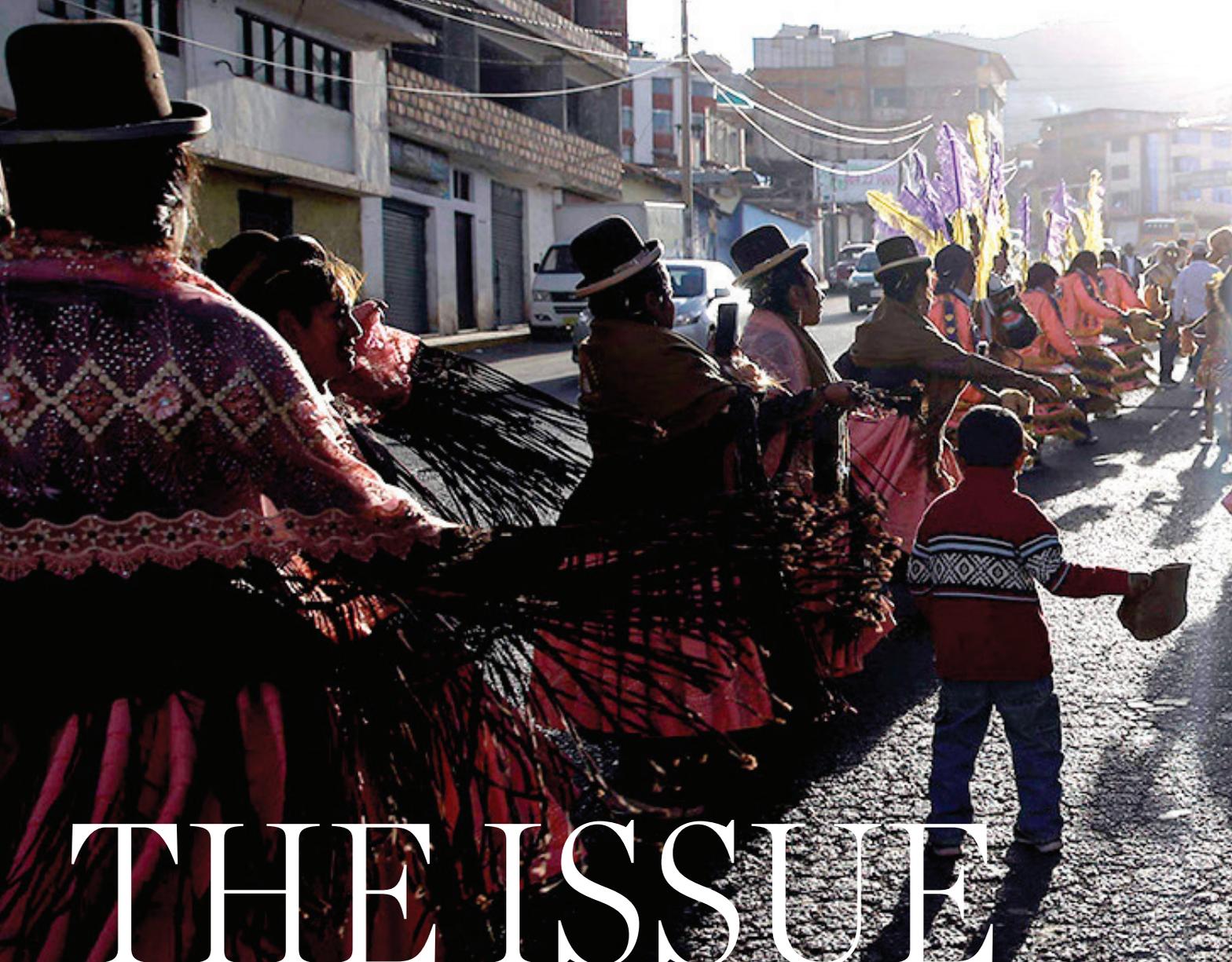
Consider the following: Nationwide, one in five girls and one in 12 boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthday; 95 percent of boys and girls are abused by someone they know; 50 percent of victims between the ages of 1 and 6 and 25 percent of victims between the ages of 12 and 17 are abused by a member of their own family; 84 percent of child sexual abuse occurs in homes. In 2014, 1.8 million adolescents in the United States were the victims of a sexual assault. The overwhelming number of victims are females. The overwhelming number of perpetrators are males, more often an older child under the age of 18. And these government statistics are merely a best guess; most incidents involving the sexual abuse of a minor go unreported.

As we seek to understand the specific ways in which the sexual abuse of children was enabled and covered up within the church, we must not forget the myriad human tragedies that are still unfolding even closer to home. The grand jury report details horrific acts by members of the clergy and their protectors over a period of 70 years. They were grave offenses against the most vulnerable among us. It is also true that what is happening in our homes and neighborhoods on an even greater scale is happening right now, as you read this column.

How are we to make sense of it? I am no expert. The social sciences, psychology, theology, even words themselves, all seem inadequate in the face of such horror. Yet it is also clear that some ways of talking about the problem are demonstrably unhelpful. Who among us, for example, when faced with the overwhelming evidence that sexual abuse is committed by males against females, in our families and neighborhoods, would ask whether some vague “culture of heterosexuality” causes this phenomenon? Who among us would think it reasonable to ask whether heterosexual males should be barred from parenting or teaching because statistics show that most acts of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by men who identify as such?

There is no part of human history, no part of human existence, that is untainted by this evil. The crimes within the church are real. They are horrific. The greater horror, however, lies in the terrifyingly banal fact that such crimes are common everywhere. There are, of course, important dimensions of this phenomenon that are specific to the church: various manifestations of clericalism and inadequate screening and formation of priests among them. But as we begin the work of addressing those issues, we must not yield to the temptation of thinking that the church's problem, while having unique dimensions, is a unique phenomenon. That would be a grave disservice, not only to the victims of sexual abuse at the hands of members of the clergy but to victims everywhere.

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



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A celebration honoring Our Lady of Copacabana, in Cuzco, Peru, Aug. 5. The popularity of the Virgen de Copacabana, the patron saint of Bolivia, has extended into Peru.

Cover image: A celebration honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston, Dec. 3. CNS photo/James Ramos, Texas Catholic Herald

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Fear not, my fellow millennials

How has the current sexual abuse crisis challenged your faith?

In response to our informal survey, conducted from Aug. 1 to Aug. 19, 62 percent of respondents told **America** that the current sexual abuse crisis has changed how they see the church.

“My faith in the church is being significantly challenged,” wrote Kathy Emrich of Voorhees, N.J. “My faith in Jesus Christ is unchanged. I pray for the church and the bishops. I truly want there to be zero tolerance for abusers in the church and zero tolerance for those that enable and condone abusive behaviors.”

Some people said that they had not been attending Mass since hearing recent revelations of sex abuse by priests and their cover-up by church leaders. Emily Baroz of New York, N.Y., wrote: “I am torn between a desire to receive the Eucharist and a strong aversion to supporting the institution of the church. For the first time, I have doubts that the church can really perform the miracle of the Eucharist. I have missed

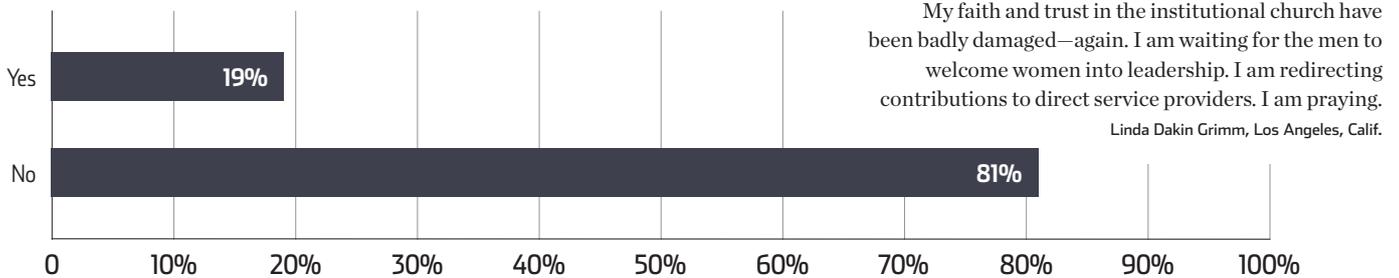
multiple Masses on purpose for the first time in my life.”

Others mentioned that they appreciated statements issued by Pope Francis. “The outpouring of support for the victims and the sorrow expressed by Pope Francis and other Catholics including priests has strengthened my faith. I am reading suggestions for positive change and ignoring homophobic accusations [against priests],” said Jennifer DeSena of Manhasset, N.Y.

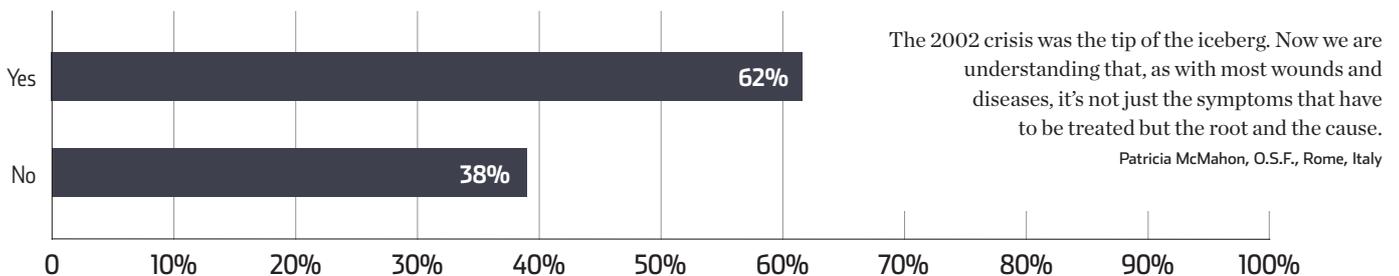
The words of parish priests appeared to be especially meaningful, although only 19 percent of respondents said they had heard about the abuse crisis at Mass. “After Mass our pastor read a statement from our bishop and added his personal words of sorrow and pain, and he asked for our prayers. It was moving,” wrote Ms. DeSena.

“I have not heard any homilies about the current abuse crisis, but I wish our pastors would talk about it,” said Carol Goodson of Carrollton, Ga.

HAS THE CURRENT ABUSE CRISIS BEEN TALKED ABOUT IN A HOMILY OR AT MASS?



DO RECENT REVELATIONS OF ABUSE CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?



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

Libertarianism Dehumanizes

Re “A Libertarian Case for the Common Good,” by Stephanie Slade (8/20): Libertarianism relies on markets for determining value, meaning a supposed free and competitive exchange. Markets—of economy, politics or ideas—are the mechanisms by which libertarianism does its business. Catholic teachings would object to the dehumanization that comes from determining value by faceless market processes. Values, properly understood, transcend the objectification that occurs in markets. So whatever transactional good might come from libertarianism, at its core it is a system that fails to reflect the fixed values by which Christians are called to understand the human person, creation and truth.

Stephen Schneck 🗨️

No Good Alternatives

Re “Pope Francis Revises Teaching: ‘No exceptions’ on Catholic Rejection of the Death Penalty,” by Kevin Clarke (8/20): While I am against capital punishment, I am also against lifetime solitary confinement. Capital punishment and lifetime solitary confinement both violate human dignity. Unfortunately, the U.S. criminal justice system does not offer good alternatives. But if one prisoner has a change of heart and repents, lifetime confinement is the lesser of two evils here.

Michael Barberi 🗨️

Advancement and Security

Re “Aspiration Nation,” by Eve Tushnet (8/20): Good point about “advancement” and, indirectly, about security. This article made me think of the centrist Democratic party: The solution to everything is to go to college.

John Mack 🗨️

Children Belong in Church

Re “The Kids Are All Right,” by Colleen Duggan (8/20): I will never forget the priest who from the pulpit invited parents with young children to walk around the church with them as needed. He reinforced that young children belong in church. My young son was quite the handful at that time, and it made all the difference in helping me to continue coming to church.

Catherine Arventos 🗨️

Closer to God

I agree that children are part of the community, and that we are all seeking to become closer to God, and it is our responsibility to urge them along in that path.

Faith is not something that is developed overnight. If one thinks about it, it doesn’t make sense to let a person wait until they’re an adult (and can finally sit still) to develop faith, any more than we would wait for a person to become an adult to introduce them to music or math.

Lena Graham 🗨️

A Watershed Moment

Re “The McCarrick Case and the Future of Reform” (Our Take, 8/6): As a victim of clerical abuse nearly a half-century ago, I feel, profoundly, that this is truly a watershed moment in our church. I applaud the writers of **America** for their courage to be honest, thoughtful and direct.

The time is now for change. Under recent papacies, transparency, rooted in the good news, did not happen. Now, there is hope in Pope Francis to do the right thing. Taking action against Cardinal McCarrick, and before him Bishop Juan Barros Madrid of Chile, sends such a message of renewal to me and victims everywhere, in and out of the pews.

As our Lord said, “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.”

Mark Joseph Williams

Far Hills, N.J.

A Piece of History

Re “When the Jesuits Left Baghdad,” by Joseph MacDonnell (Vantage Point, 7/9): Thank you for this piece of history. I was privileged to have spent three great years (1957-60) on this mission teaching young Iraqis as well as studying Arabic. Thank you to Jesuits who carry on this great work with Iraqi refugees in Jordan.

Jim Powers

Evans, Ga.

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

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

The Pattern of Sin Is Clear

The Pennsylvania grand jury report on sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, released on Tuesday, Aug. 14, recounts abuse by 301 priests across six dioceses, with more than 1,000 victims. While the vast majority of the cases described by the grand jury predate the first tidal wave of the U.S. church's sexual abuse crisis in 2002, the visceral reaction to this report and the flood of media reports it is triggering are stark evidence that the crisis is far from over.

This is not to say that there is an ongoing epidemic of priests committing sexual abuse of children. Though vigilance is still required and even one case of abuse is unacceptable, there is reason to believe that the practices and policies adopted in the Dallas Charter, along with greater public awareness of the problem, have drastically reduced the incidence of abuse.

But while the reforms adopted in 2002 have helped prevent further abuse, they have not repaired the devastating breach of trust caused by years of obstruction, denial and negligence on the part of leaders of the institutional church, especially bishops and superiors of religious communities, who returned abusers to ministry repeatedly, while doing little or nothing to care for their victims or protect those who were vulnerable. This crisis in the church continues—most painfully for the survivors of abuse whose stories have not been heard and whose wounds have not been sufficiently cared for. They have even seen some of the bishops who failed to protect them promoted through the ecclesial ranks.

It is part of the church's great shame that we will not willingly and fully hear the Gospel's call to repen-

tance for these crimes and sins until it is delivered to us by a grand jury. Yet as the church finally begins to hear the call for repentance, here are a few key steps its leaders, especially bishops, should take in the months ahead:

Focus first on the survivors of abuse, not on the effects of this crisis on the church as an institution, its reputation or financial standing.

Do not be reflexively defensive or dismissive in response to accusations against the church and revelations of past or ongoing failures. Some of the responses of bishops to the grand jury report have demonstrated a remarkable tone deafness to the horror that the faithful are currently experiencing and to the trauma survivors still live with. Our primary response to this crisis must not be framed in legal, financial or practical terms but in the language of true contrition, sorrow and, above all, action and reform. The example of Bishop Lawrence Persico of Erie, who chose to testify before the grand jury in person and replaced lawyers who resisted disclosure of records, is a model for other bishops to follow.

Do not wait for civil authorities to bring past scandals to light. The experience of the last 16 years shows that the worst will eventually come to light. Such disclosures should be anticipated and embraced, not resisted until they are imposed. All dioceses and religious communities should follow the example of those that have begun to make a comprehensive public accounting of their knowledge of abuse claims. One of the few remaining ways that the church can offer mercy to survivors of sexual abuse is to demonstrate through such voluntary disclosures that we value the sacred dignity

of the victims more than the church's reputation and security.

Do not pretend that bishops alone can hold themselves and each other to account. Bishop Edward Scharfberger of Albany has called for a commission of laypeople to investigate claims of abuse and misconduct against bishops. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, the president of the U.S. bishops' conference, has announced that the bishops will take up a comprehensive plan to address this "moral catastrophe" in their November meeting. Such a plan should be swiftly implemented, with a clear mandate for a commission to examine the culture, policies and practices that enabled bishops to continue assigning abusive priests and to recommend effective remedies. The bishops of the United States should both endorse such a commission themselves and also ask Pope Francis to give it his clear approval. As we first said several weeks ago, the bishops should not hesitate to call on those among them who have failed most grievously to acknowledge their faults and to resign.

Find ways to begin to make meaningful reparation to the survivors of sexual abuse in the church. This should include meaningful financial support to help with counseling and to make some measure of restitution for the trauma they have lived with for years. The church may be concerned about the effect of expansions of civil liability for sexual abuse, which can financially bankrupt dioceses and limit ministry to people in grave need. But the church must demonstrate greater concern for the needs of victims, which have too long been neglected, a sin that has left the church morally

bankrupt in the public mind. Compensation funds like the one established in the Archdiocese of New York may provide a good starting point, though we must ensure that such efforts prioritize care for survivors over the church's avoidance of legal liability.

Beyond new safeguards and financial restitution, the church should also make a significant act of public repentance and reparation, especially within its liturgical life. Imagine a publicly declared day of fast and penance for bishops and priests, on which bishops and other ecclesial leaders humbly prostrate themselves and listen in silence to the testimony of the faithful. Imagine a simultaneous act of contrition by bishops and priests, in their own names and on behalf of their predecessors, in every cathedral in the country. The church should also consider ways for parishes to mark their solidarity with survivors of abuse beyond merely adding a petition to the prayer of the faithful.

We do not pretend that these recommendations are comprehensive. They are merely a starting point. Above all, while we can acknowledge the great good done by most priests, no one should pretend that the moral failures by church leaders that accompanied the grievous crimes of some of their priests were merely isolated or accidental events. The pattern of sin is clear. Now we must confront the catastrophe that has befallen the church as a result and beg for the grace of conversion, however agonizing that process may be.

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Three steps to more civil political debate

Following Donald J. Trump's surprise election as president, there seemed to be a nascent desire among many Americans to better understand people on the other side of the political divide. Reporters were deployed to Middle America to discover what motivated voters to vote the way they did. Even the liberal comedian Jon Stewart, known for his cynical sense of humor, preached empathy and mutual respect.

Last spring, as I began to travel the country for Trump's America, a four-year reporting project that takes the pulse of voters in eight counties that were pivotal to Trump's election, I felt a glimmer of hope that after the most turbulent presidential campaign in recent memory, Americans were ready to engage with one another to unite the country.

I am no longer as hopeful. I am finding more and more people who say they have fallen out with friends and family members over politics and have simply stopped trying to understand those with whom they disagree. Many have retreated to their ideological bubbles, in terms of both the media they consume and the people with whom they associate.

During a recent trip to a rural area in northeastern Iowa, I met a university professor who said he uses President Trump as a filter when deciding whether or not to befriend someone. "If I don't know you and you come out with that Trump sh—, I really don't want to get to know you," he said.

I also spoke with a conservative couple and their progressive neighbor who separately told me they had fallen out over some politically charged Facebook posts.

Another woman became emo-

tional while recalling how political conversations with a group of long-time female friends at her country club had become extremely tense. The tension sometimes erupted into outright hostility rooted in her exasperation over her friends' unflinching support for Mr. Trump.

These anecdotes seem to reveal a larger trend. As the headline of a recent USA Today poll put it, "On Trump, we can't even agree on why we disagree, and we assume the worst."

People are purging their friend groups of anyone outside their political tribe. Trump administration officials are being refused service or harassed at restaurants. And I have noticed more opinion pieces like a recent one in the Jewish magazine *The Forward* titled, "No, we don't have to be friends with Trump supporters," whose author argued, "When they go low, stomp them on the head."

The media deserves much of the blame for our deep political divides. Just as politicians win votes by stirring up their base voters, many media outlets play to their core audiences' sense of outrage. Then there is social media, which has a special power to bring out the worst in people.

This leads me to three ways we can start to engage again and move forward to a more civil political discussion.

First, spend less time discussing politics on social media. It is much easier to have civil, respectful conversations when we are speaking in person, not through the anonymity of social media.

Second, make sure you are engaging for the right reasons. Are you offended by your liberal friend's belief that Mr. Trump is a racist simply because you do not want to grapple with what that might

say about you? Are you challenging your friend's support for Mr. Trump's immigration policies because you wish to understand that person's view or because you want to prove that your friend is a "deplorable" person? If it is the former, your task is easy. It requires only that you ask fair questions and listen, and then listen some more.

Third, embrace the struggle between what may first seem to be competing truths. I am not talking about "alternative facts." I mean allow for nuance in assessing the merits of a policy or a president. It means recognizing, for instance, that Mr. Trump is a narcissistic bully while also acknowledging that he has done some things right. Or it could mean believing that Barack Obama was a flawed president without also embracing the myth that he is a Muslim or was born in Kenya. I use that example because it is exactly the argument I heard from a former Obama voter turned Trump supporter. For her, rejecting Mr. Obama meant entertaining the worst slurs made against him.

F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."

When it comes to our political discussions, what we have right now is a dysfunctional nation. Our political tribalism is making us stupid and ruining our relationships. The remedy is not only to engage our political opponents but to do so with humility, patience and a real desire to understand.

Daniel Allott is the author of the website Trump's America: The Race to 2020 and a former deputy commentary editor at The Washington Examiner.



Photo: Joseph Lawton

Dulles at 100

Celebrating the Work and Legacy of Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.

September 24, 2018 | 12 - 7:30 p.m.

Fordham University | Lincoln Center Campus | New York City

This year marks the centenary of the birth of Avery Cardinal Dulles, and a decade since the death of this famous convert and Jesuit priest, one of the most renowned American theologians of the past century.

Fordham University, where Cardinal Dulles spent the last 20 years of his distinguished life and career, will begin a year-long observance of this milestone with a conference examining Dulles' legacy and his continuing impact on the Catholic Church in America and in the world.

Featured speakers will include Dulles' longtime Fordham colleague, **Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J.**, professor emerita of theology, and **Peter C. Phan**, the Ellacuria Chair of Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University.

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Brooks is a contributing opinion writer to The New York Times and appeared on the cover of *America* magazine's February 20, 2017 issue.

For more information & to purchase tickets, visit:
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Victims of clergy sexual abuse and family members listen to the details of the Pennsylvania grand jury's report in Harrisburg on Aug. 14.

U.S. bishops announce three-point plan to address 'moral catastrophe' of abuse

By Julie Asher

AP Photo/Matt Rourke

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced on Aug. 16 a comprehensive plan to address the “moral catastrophe” of the new sexual abuse scandal hitting the U.S. church, which includes a grand jury report released on Aug. 14 describing in detail claims of sexual abuse of children in six Pennsylvania dioceses over seven decades.

The plan “will involve the laity, lay experts, the clergy and the Vatican,” Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, archbishop of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, said. This plan will be presented to the full body of bishops at their general assembly in Baltimore in November.

He said the “substantial involvement of the laity” from law enforcement, psychology and other disciplines will be essential to this process. He also said it is clear that “one root cause” of this catastrophe “is the failure of episcopal leadership.”

In a lengthy letter addressed to all Catholics, Cardinal DiNardo laid out three goals established by the bishops' executive committee in a series of meetings held on the week of Aug. 13.

The first is a “full investigation” into “the questions surrounding” Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, a former cardinal and retired archbishop of Washington. He said the executive committee will ask the Vatican to conduct an apostolic visitation into these questions “in concert with” a group of

laypeople, identified for their expertise by the U.S.C.C.B.'s lay-run National Review Board, who will be “empowered to act.”

With a credible allegation that Archbishop McCarrick abused a minor nearly 47 years ago and accusations of sexual misconduct with seminarians, many have been asking how the prelate could have risen up the ranks of the church as an auxiliary bishop, bishop, archbishop and finally cardinal.

Cardinal DiNardo described the second and third goals, respectively, as an opening of new and confidential channels for reporting complaints against bishops and advocacy for more effective resolution of future complaints.

The three goals “will be pursued according to three criteria: proper independence, sufficient authority and substantial leadership by laity,” he said.

“Two weeks ago, I shared with you my sadness, anger, and shame over the recent revelations concerning Archbishop Theodore McCarrick,” the cardinal said. “Those sentiments continue and are deepened in view of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report.... We are faced with a spiritual crisis that requires not only spiritual conversion, but practical changes to avoid repeating the sins and failures of the past.”

Julie Asher, Catholic News Service

For complete coverage of the sexual abuse crisis and the U.S. church, visit americamagazine.org.

Is there a sexual abuse reckoning ahead for Latino U.S. Catholics?

By J.D. Long-García

When he was 12, Dominic told his parents he did not want to be an altar server anymore. He had been serving at a parish in Southern California run by Michael Baker, who was later convicted of molesting children and defrocked.

“We need to learn to listen to our children,” Dominic’s mother, Virginia Zamora, told *America*. “They do have symptoms.... My son didn’t want to go to church again. He hated God.”

Her son was abused for years, she said. The then-priest would tell her son: “No one is going to believe you. Who’s going to believe you over me?” Ms. Zamora said the revelations about former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick should be a wake-up call for Latinos, whom she described as reluctant to speak against the clergy.

“Hispanics believe it’s their cross to bear; that’s how they live with it,” said Ms. Zamora, who works with the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, known as SNAP. “But it’s not our cross. We need to speak up.”

Hosffman Ospino, an associate professor of Hispanic ministry and religious education at Boston College, said the Latino community “tends to go under the radar.”

“It worries me that in some cases of abuse, some Hispanics feel afraid of their legal situation,” he said, referring to undocumented immigrants.

Because of their culture, Hispanic immigrants, in general, tend to support the clergy, Mr. Ospino said. In 2002, white Catholics in Boston demonstrated against the church as decades of abuse were revealed. But the Latino community had a different reaction, he said.

“While the Catholic community was protesting—and rightly so—the Latino community was holding vigils for their priests—and the victims as well,” Mr. Ospino said. “It’s not that they were naïve because they’re immigrants. But this cultural Catholicism somehow invites responses that also involve prayer, forgiveness and reconciliation.”

Yet he believes second- and third-generation Hispanics may react differently.

“They may grow up with a sense of suspicion, and that sense of suspicion will rob them of role models who are

bishops and priests,” he said.

Cristofer Pereyra, the director of the Hispanic Mission Office of the Diocese of Phoenix, said immigrants are now likely aware of abuse because of widespread incidents in Chile and other parts of Latin America.

But with respect to former Cardinal McCarrick, Mr. Pereyra has not seen a lot of coverage in the Spanish-language media. He contrasted it with the nonstop stories about ex-priest Alberto Cutié, a television personality who left the priesthood after he was photographed kissing a woman on a Florida beach.

The church needs to encourage the Latino community to come forward with allegations, he said. “We’ve made a lot of progress, but we still have to do more.”

Deacon Bernie Nojadera, the executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office of Child and Youth Protection, said dioceses are preparing Spanish-speaking trainers to educate parishioners about abuse.

“As the demographics are changing, we’re reaching out and providing materials,” he said. “It’s a tough topic to talk about, but this is an evil. This is a crime. We need to be able to talk about it.”

Ms. Zamora said cultural dispositions may be difficult to overcome. “As for Hispanics, whatever the priest says, goes. But that’s not right,” she said. “The priest is not God. Nobody is above God.”

Ms. Zamora believes that the abuse her son suffered led to his alcoholism. A few years ago, he died of cirrhosis of the liver.

“It’s sad, but now he’s safe,” she said. “No one can ever do this to him again.”

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



Members of an advocacy group for victims of sexual abuse at a Mass in Osorno, Chile. CNS photo/Fernando Lavo, Reuters



The church must rid its supply chains of modern slavery, says former Vatican ambassador

“Even here in Rome” the phenomenon of human trafficking and compelled labor is present, Pope Francis told pilgrims at St. Peter’s Square on July 30, the day before the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. He said it was everyone’s duty to oppose the “shameful crime” of human trafficking, “this scourge” that “reduces many men, women and children to slavery.”

Around the world, perhaps the most publicized victims of human trafficking and modern compelled labor are connected with the global sex trade or domestic servitude. But among 40 million worldwide who are believed to be caught in a trap of forced labor are many millions who work in manufacturing, assembly, agriculture and food services.

John McCarthy, Q.C., a former ambassador to the Holy See from Australia who has worked intensely on the issue, argues that human trafficking and modern slavery can never be countered by enforcement efforts alone. He says that the root of the problem must be addressed—that is, at the very beginning of the modern supply chain, where most compelled labor can be located.

During a visit to **America’s** offices in May, the ambassador said that the victims of modern slavery can be found in every country and every industrial sector, but notable high-risk sectors include construction, manufacturing and agriculture. And because of the sheer extent of the supply

chains that eventually reach Catholic institutions—a primary example in Sydney are the thousands of school uniforms manufactured in Asia each year for Catholic school children—the possible exposure of the church to modern slavery is enormous.

But, he argued, so is its capacity to respond to the problem, given the church’s size and reach.

Ambassador McCarthy urges the global church to take the lead in fighting modern slavery. By aggressively policing its own supply lines, the church could be an example for other large contemporary institutions to follow, he said. In Australia, the Archdiocese of Sydney has begun a pilot program aimed at ridding schools and parishes of slavery-tainted goods and services.

That is no small challenge in a global economy where manufacturers and well-known brands often outsource the real work of production to increasingly anonymous subcontractors, obscuring direct corporate connections to unseemly labor practices conditions and diminishing their ethical responsibility to mitigate them.

The Archdiocese of Sydney began its effort with a fact-finding Antislavery Task Force in 2017 that assessed the archdiocese’s reliance on dubious suppliers and eventually established a comprehensive response that included antislavery diocesan-wide procurement guidelines,



Migrants rest at the port of Tarifa after being intercepted by Spain's Maritime Rescue Service. Authorities say a popular route for human traffickers is from northern Africa to Spain.

AP Photo/Marcos Moreno

antislavery education for officials charged with procurement and parish families, and welfare services for victims of trafficking or slavery.

Ambassador McCarthy wonders what the impact would be if the global Catholic Church committed itself—from the parish school on up to the largest institutions—to purging slave-produced goods from its supply chains. He ran through a litany of other sometimes vast Catholic-directed or -oriented enterprises, including investment funds, development programs and insurance groups. “All of them have millions of dollars at their control, but they don’t have an anti-slavery policy.”

What if all Catholic parishioners around the world were taught how to avoid products and services that have been connected to human trafficking and compelled labor?

That would have a twofold impact, diminishing the commercial advantages of slavery while assisting another group for which Pope Francis has frequently expressed a special concern for—the world’s 68 million displaced and refugee people. Advocates for those forced to migrate say they are among the most vulnerable targets of human traffickers.

Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent.*
Twitter: @ClarkeAtAmerica.



Pro-life activists celebrate in Buenos Aires.

AP Photo/Luisa Balaguer

Argentine Senate rejects abortion decriminalization bill

The Argentine Senate voted against a bill that would have decriminalized abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy.

Senators voted 38 to 31 against the measure early Aug. 9 following a 15-hour debate. The measure had been approved in June by the lower house of Congress.

The Argentine bishops’ conference hailed the vote, saying the debate in the country opened an opportunity for dialogue and a chance to focus more on social ministry.

The Senate debate revealed deep divisions in Argentina, where support for decriminalizing abortion drew stronger support in Buenos Aires, the capital, than in the more conservative provinces. Observers attributed that difference to the bill being voted down in the Senate, which includes more representation from outlying areas.

The vote came as a movement of women and supporters of the measure—wearing green handkerchiefs—filled the streets outside the Congress as voting occurred. Catholics, meanwhile, celebrated the Eucharist.

“Everyone had time to express their viewpoints and be heard by legislators in a healthy democratic exercise. But the only ones that didn’t have an opportunity to make themselves heard are the human beings that struggled to be born,” Cardinal Mario Poli, Pope Francis’ successor in Buenos Aires, said on Aug. 8 in his homily at what organizers called a Mass for Life.

In an acknowledgment that the church could be doing more to work with women, Cardinal Poli said, “We have done little to accompany the women when they find themselves in tough situations, particularly when [the pregnancy] is the result of rape or situations of extreme poverty.”

In a statement after the vote, the bishops’ conference said it was time to address the “new divisions developing among us...through a renewed exercise of dialogue.”

“We are facing great pastoral challenges to speak more clearly on the value of life,” the bishops said.
David Agren, *Catholic News Service.*



Religious freedom around the world under siege; Christian persecution is especially acute

A retired bishop waits to hear confession at an unofficial Catholic church in Hebei Province, China.

CNS photo/Thomas Peter, Reuters

Fulani herdsmen have killed more than 6,000 Christians in Nigeria so far this year, the Christian Association of Nigeria in Plateau State alleges, and have been allowed to escape scot-free by government security. The violence may be rooted in disputes over land rights, but it appears increasingly sectarian.

“There is no doubt that the sole purpose of these attacks is aimed at ethnic cleansing, land grabbing and forceful ejection of the Christian natives from their ancestral land and heritage,” the Christian Association charged in its June statement.

Nigeria represents only one location of the many violent conflicts over religion today. Religious freedom around the world has taken a beating over the last two years, according to a number of authoritative sources, including the U.S. Department of State and the Pew Research Center. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom also reports that the most severe repression based on religion includes genocide, enslavement, sexual assault, forced displacement and conversions, and bans on children participating in religious activities.

The U.S. State Department signaled a renewed interest in the problem by hosting a Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom at the end of July. While some remain skeptical that the Trump administration will remain com-

mitted to the freedom of all religions, owing to policies that have been hostile to Muslims, Sam Brownback, the U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, noted that representatives of many faiths participated in the ministerial.

“We wanted to include everyone of every faith or no faith at all, everyone who cares about religious freedom and who will join us in this cause,” Mr. Brownback said in his opening remarks to the gathering. “It’s a right given by God and it’s a beautiful part of our human dignity.”

It is also a human dignity under profound threat around the world. The Catholic pastoral group Aid to the Church in Need reports in “Persecuted and Forgotten?” that the worldwide persecution of Christians is “today worse than at any time in history.” A.C.N. reports that as many as 600,000 Christians were suffered some form of religious persecution in 2016.

According to Open Doors, a Christian advocacy group, 215 million Christians worldwide live under the threat of “high” to “extreme” religious persecution. North Korea claims the top spot—for the 16th consecutive year—in its list of states where Christians are most endangered. The group reports that more than 50,000 Christians there are in prisons or labor camps.

The Pew Research Center’s ninth annual study of glob-

al restrictions on religion also contains distressing news. The share of countries with “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions on religious beliefs and practices rose from 25 percent in 2015 to 28 percent in 2016. Meanwhile, the share of countries with “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities involving religion—that is, acts of religious hostility by private individuals, organizations or groups in society—remained at a historically high rate of 27 percent. Overall, 83 countries in 2016 had high or very high levels of restrictions on religion—whether from government or social hostilities. This was up from 58 in 2007, Pew’s baseline year for the continuing study.

In many states, this worsening trend has been accompanied by greater authoritarianism in general, according to the 2018 U.S.C.I.R.F. annual report. In China, religious expression has been under a sustained assault as President Xi Jinping continues a renewed campaign “against the infiltration of Western ideology.” Christian churches have been demolished, and identifying markers like crosses have been removed or destroyed.

The U.S.C.I.R.F. urges the Trump administration to respond to the continuing threat through greater cooperation with international partners, a focus on prisoners of conscience and victims of blasphemy laws, and attention “to the importance of empowering women to fully exercise their rights to freedom of religion or belief.”

But its report also finds cause for optimism, saying that while severe violations of religious freedom still occur, they are now less likely to go unnoticed. “The media and civil society in the United States and abroad are more focused on international religious freedom issues than ever before,” according to the commission.

Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent*. Twitter: @ClarkeAtAmerica.

Editor’s note: In the infographic on attitudes toward immigration (8/20), the bar chart included an incorrect number. The NPR/Ipsos poll found that 16 percent of Democrats support building a wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border, not 11 percent.

GLOBAL RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION (PEW RESEARCH CENTER)

■ “Very high” danger to religious practices ■ No specific data available but evidence of severe repression

“Very high” level of government restrictions:

- Algeria
- Azerbaijan
- Brunei
- Burma (Myanmar)
- China
- Eritrea
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Kazakhstan
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- Tajikistan
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
- Western Sahara

Information not available:
North Korea

“Very high” level of social hostilities:

- Bangladesh
- India
- Israel
- Nigeria
- Palestinian territories

“Very high” levels of both government restrictions and social hostilities directed at religious belief:

- Egypt
- Iraq
- Russia
- Syria

Countries with “very high” or “high” overall restrictions on religion:

2007: 58 (29% of total)
2016: 83 (42% of total)

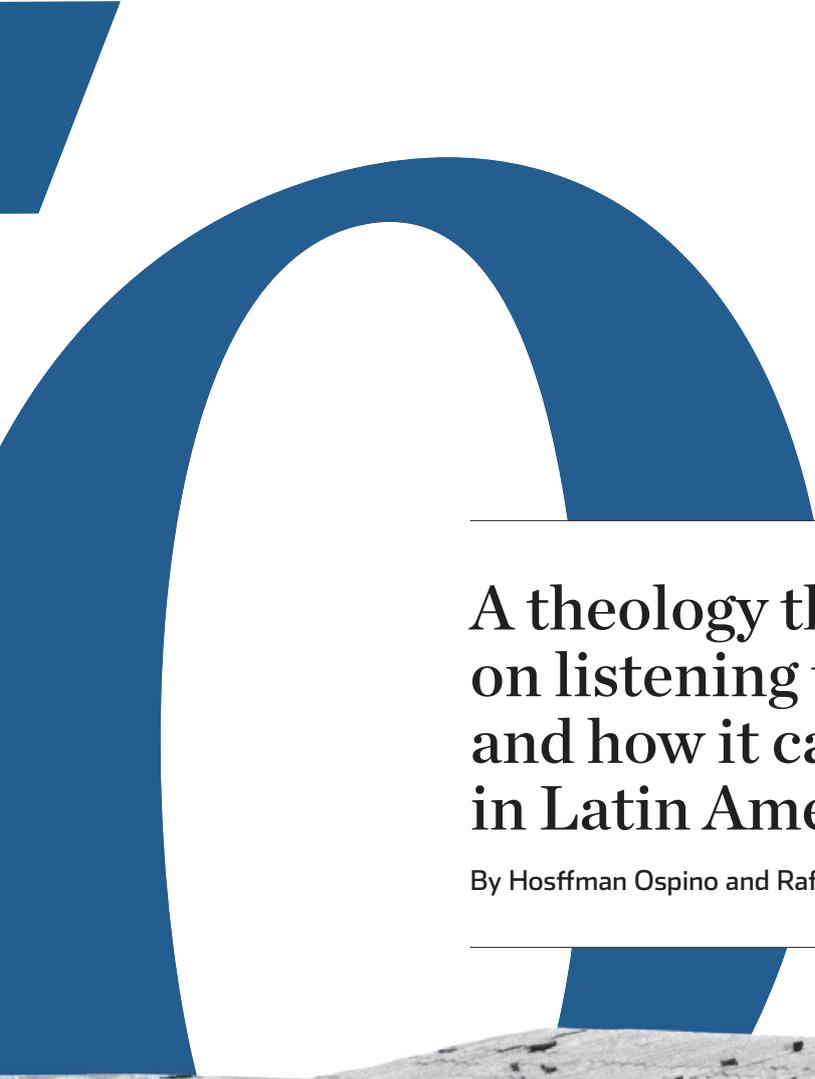


215 MILLION, or 1 in 12 Christians worldwide, experience “high levels of persecution” in the countries on the Open Doors World Watch List.

Sources: “Global Uptick in Government Restrictions on Religion in 2016,” Pew Research Center, June 21, 2018 (North Korea cited as “among the most repressive in the world” but not categorized because of a lack of data); estimate of the number of Christians experiencing persecution from “World Watch List 2018,” Open Doors USA.

Medellín at





A theology that insists on listening to the poor and how it came to flourish in Latin America

By Hosffman Ospino and Rafael Luciani





Children wait for the pope in Medellín, Colombia, on Sept. 9, 2017. Pope Francis' five-year-old pontificate has served as a clear reminder that the wisdom and insights from Medellín are very much alive.

Late in the evening on Tuesday, Nov. 16, 1965, only 22 days before the closing of the Second Vatican Council, about 40 bishops gathered at the ancient Catacombs of St. Domitilla in Rome to celebrate the Eucharist. Early Christians living in the Eternal City held this long stretch of galleries and tombs in high regard. The bodies of many martyrs laid to rest there reminded them of living the Gospel in radical ways.

Most of those bishops were Latin American. There were also some from Europe, Africa, Asia and one from North America (a Canadian). Dom Hélder Câmara, then the bishop of Recife in Brazil, led the group. They signed an agreement known as the “Pact of the Catacombs.” Inspired by the spirit of the council, the bishops affirmed their faith in Jesus Christ and renewed their love for the Gospel.

The bishops committed to living in simple ways, without privileges, embracing austerity and poverty as well as the poor and the promotion of justice and liberation. They promised to advocate “laws, social structures and institutions that are necessary for justice, equality and the integral, harmonious development of the whole person and of all persons, and thus for the advent of a new social order, worthy of the children of God.”

Among the signatories of the pact were Bishops Man-

uel Larraín of Chile and Marcos Gregorio McGrath of Panama. Bishop McGrath was actively involved in the discussions that led to the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.” Bishop Larraín was the president of the newly created Latin American Episcopal Conference (better known as CELAM from its Spanish-language name, Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano).

A few weeks later, the bishops returned to their home dioceses inspired by the council and its final documents. It was time to bring Vatican II to life at the local level. Bishop Larraín and other bishops set in motion a series of events and planning processes that led to the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968. The new momentum of the council and the spirit of the pact signed that evening at the catacombs guided a new dawn for Latin American Catholicism. Medellín would be the first and perhaps one of the most successful exercises of appropriation of the Second Vatican Council at the continental level.

Fertile Soil for Vatican II

Latin America in the 1960s was fertile soil for the seeds of the council. More than 90 percent of the population



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Medellín would be the first and perhaps one of the most successful exercises of appropriation of the Second Vatican Council at the continental level.

as agents of their own destinies, Latin Americans were subject to forces upon which they had little or no control. There was a need for a different analysis of the reality and for fresher language that would affirm the dignity of every human person and provide a renewed sense of hope for all. Catholic pastoral leaders on the continent read the conclusions of the council with enthusiasm and seized the moment.

In 1965, Bishop Larraín wrote a pastoral letter entitled “Development: Success or Failure in Latin America.” He spoke of underdevelopment as an evil. To promote every person, he called for a humanism that would confront a threefold hunger: physical, cultural and spiritual. Bishop Larraín spoke of the existence of “vicious circles of misery that are the result of current structures.”

This insight brought to light the reality of structural sin. Latin American bishops and theologians began to talk about the need to address the root causes of structural violence, poverty and oppression. The Gospel demanded new ways of being and acting that affirmed the dignity of every human person. Pope Paul VI echoed several of these insights in his 1967 encyclical “Populorum Progressio,” writing that the “development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded.”

An authentically Latin American model of theological and pastoral reflection was emerging through meetings across the continent. The work of theologians like Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P. (who was a diocesan priest at the time),

self-identified as Catholic. While Europe, which had been traditionally associated with Catholicism, wrestled with increasing secularism, Latin America became the continent of Catholic hope.

To be clear, it was a mixed hope. Poverty, inequality, corruption, political instability and illiteracy, among other social ills, were rampant. But countless Catholics throughout the continent were rereading the Scriptures in small communities and changing the ways and structures in which they lived as baptized Christians. Yes, there was hope.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the winds of economic, political and social transformation roared strongly throughout Latin America. Governments in the region had embraced so-called theories of development fueled by neocapitalist ideology, which focused mainly on economic growth. Policies and practices emerging from these theories benefitted only certain elites. The vast majority of Latin Americans lived in dehumanizing poverty.

Revolutions, internal wars, dictatorships and even the exploration of alternative ideologies like communism were common. But the lives of most people, especially the poor and those living in rural areas, changed little. Rather than acting

Hispanic Catholics, soon to constitute half of all Catholics in the United States, have channeled the wisdom of Medellín into the life of the church in this country. 🌊🌊

Juan Luis Segundo, S.J., and the Rev. Lucio Gera was highly influential. In his writings, Father Gutiérrez referred to a theology committed to denouncing the causes of underdevelopment and its sinfulness. Because Christianity is holistically liberating, the liberation that Jesus Christ brings to humanity also involves liberation from oppressive realities in history. Between 1965 and 1968, Latin American bishops met in Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Brazil and developed the framework, language and focus that would characterize Medellín.

The Way of Medellín

Medellín revolutionized pastoral and theological reflection in Latin America. The conversations leading to it, the meeting itself and its conclusions set the tone, language and method for how Latin American Catholics and many other Catholics throughout the world would reflect on evangelization during the next half century.

In his 1975 apostolic exhortation “On Evangelization in the Modern World,” Pope Paul VI echoed the language of liberation used in Medellín: “Between evangelization and human advancement—development and liberation there are in fact profound links.” More recently, the Fifth General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007 and Pope Francis’ five-year-old pontificate have served as clear reminders that the wisdom and insights from Medellín are very much alive.

Medellín seamlessly integrated and further developed

the well-known see-judge-act method, popularized by Cardinal Joseph Leo Cardijn of Belgium in the years preceding the council. The method is an invitation to engage reality with a critical eye, evaluate it from the perspective of the faith using the best available tools for discernment and act upon such reality in an informed manner seeking transformation. In Medellín, the method evolved into an instrument of social analysis. During the years of preparation, leaders met regularly with social scientists, anthropologists and other experts to understand Latin America. These conversations embraced a model of reflection based on the conviction that theology is to follow conversion and spring from a grounded understanding of people’s reality.

Theology emerges as a “second moment” or a “second act.” Informed by this on-the-ground theological reflection, pastoral action should respond to the particular realities that shape the lives of God’s people here and now.

Medellín also tested Vatican II’s vision of church as the “people of God” by placing it in the concrete realities of Latin America, where most people experienced poverty. That meant starting where the people lived and understanding who they were. If the church was to respond to the challenges of being Christian in Latin America, it could not do it without listening to the diversity of voices and experiences that constitute the people of God.

In Latin America in 1968, the church knew itself as a poor church because most of its members experienced poverty. The poor had to play a central role in the reflection about evangelization and the building of the church on the continent. This meant guaranteeing the creation of spaces where bishops, members of the clergy, theologians, elites and others could attentively listen to people’s voices and honor their wisdom.

Small communities provided a space for personal encounter, growth in the faith in a communal environment and the advancement of works to promote the human person, particularly the poor. For Medellín, the building of ecclesial communion starts from below, in the particular circumstances where people encounter Jesus Christ and his Gospel every day. When that does not happen, reform is needed.

Furthermore, Medellín speaks explicitly of the socio-political dimensions of evangelization. It names the essential relationship between the church’s mission and the engagement of the Christian community to bring about the common good. In their final message to the people of Latin America, the bishops gathered at Medellín invited Catholics to join them in their decision to “inspire, encourage and press for a new order of justice that incorporates all [people] in the decision-making of their own communities.”



A Weenhayek indigenous girl outside her home near Villamontes, Bolivia in 2014. Medellín tested Vatican II's vision of church as the "people of God" by placing it in the concrete realities of Latin America.

CNS photo/Paul Jeffrey

In this sense, Medellín calls all the baptized to act as agents of change in society. On a continent marred by poverty and its effects, Medellín acknowledged and affirmed the voice of the poor and their role in transforming the church and society in light of the Gospel. Medellín called for the creation of conditions for all to flourish.

Evangelization is more than raw indoctrination or merely giving material assistance without helping recipients take ownership of their futures. Evangelization is about proclaiming the good news while promoting the human person and the common good in response to God's will. Evangelization demands the conversion of structures, many of which embody sin, to further justice and solidarity. Evangelization, therefore, leads to a reform of ecclesial structures and mentalities—what today we call pastoral conversion—so the church can be an authentic sign of Christian liberation for all, as are Jesus and his Gospel.

Medellín reminded Catholics that evangelization "must direct itself toward the formation of a personal, internalized, mature faith." A mature faith is a faith capable of reading the signs of the times, which "are expressed above all else in the social order." These are "signs from God" to which we must respond inspired by the desire to promote social justice. At the risk of becoming irrelevant and disconnected, the church in its evangelizing efforts should not ignore reality with its demands and possibilities. Neither should it ignore poor people's everyday experiences.

A Step Forward in Reflection about Poverty

Early reception of Vatican II among U.S. Catholics stressed the insights of the "Decree on Ecumenism," the "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" and the "Declaration on Religious Freedom." In Latin America, reception of the council focused on the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (salvation in history) and the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (the people of God among the peoples of the earth).

The bishops gathered at Medellín also further discussed topics treated in a limited way at the council: the church of the poor, a church committed to liberation and human promotion, a church that denounced poverty. In this way, the church in Latin America was doing theology in light of its own ecclesial and social reality. From that reality, which is a rich font of theological and pastoral insight, it continues to inform the rest of the Catholic world.

Medellín built upon the conviction that to follow Jesus is to journey with our sisters and brothers who are poor, the crucified ones of history. The bishops at Medellín spoke of social injustices that kept the majority of people in Latin America living in "dismal poverty, which in many cases becomes inhuman wretchedness." Medellín did not limit itself to "talk about" poverty. Its novelty was in the courage to name and unmask the causes of poverty as part of the process of following Jesus.



Participants in the Region VIII Encuentro gathering in Alexandria, Minn., on April 13. The Encuentros—convened nationally in 1972, 1977, 1985, 2000 and 2018—have served as catalysts to assess the church’s institutional response to the fast-growing Hispanic presence

CNS photo/Dianne Towalski, The Catholic Spirit

Naming the evident relationship between inequality and poverty—and the sinfulness of the unjust conditions that lead to them—has gained Medellín plenty of enthusiasts as well as detractors. Medellín was not shy about highlighting the disturbing correlation between small elites becoming richer and more powerful while the vast majorities drown in poverty and anonymity. Today we know that 1 percent of the world’s population owns more than half of all existing wealth. More than two-thirds of the wealth produced in recent years has gone into the hands of that 1 percent.

But the bishops gathered at Medellín wanted more than a mere declaration. They met to identify commitments and actions for change. In their own words: “This assembly has been invited to take a decision and establish programs only under the condition that we are disposed to carry them out as a personal commitment even at the cost of sacrifice.” Medellín captured the voice of a portion of the church that has much to say to the rest of the world, with its own language, committed to the necessary transformations to live its mission.

Medellín in the United States

During the last 50 years, Medellín has been studied, discussed and appropriated in various contexts in the United States. Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter “*Populorum Progressio*” provided U.S. Catholics with important language with which to understand Latin America and paved the way for robust conversations about Medellín. Theology and ministerial formation programs in Catholic universities and seminaries throughout the country have been instrumental in introducing students to Medellín.

Medellín is often associated with the methods and reflections of Latin American theologies of liberation. From this perspective, Medellín has been a natural conversation partner for U.S. Catholic black, Hispanic, Asian and feminist theologies, among others, insofar as it shares common language, concerns and methods with these bodies of theological thought. We should not, however, miss the particularity of Medellín. It was the collective voice and shared wisdom of the Latin American Catholic bishops in 1968, a voice and wisdom echoed loudly for five decades, despite critiques and even opposition in some sectors in the Catholic world.

Hispanic Catholics, who will soon constitute half of all Catholics in the United States, have channeled the wisdom of Medellín into the life of the church in this country. Millions of Catholic immigrants from Latin America were evangelized in its spirit and bring that formation to enrich the life of the church in the United States. The Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, Tex., now a college, for decades facilitated conversations among scholars and pastoral leaders from Latin America and the United States on topics associated with Medellín. Several Hispanic Catholic theologians have intentionally incorporated the insights of Medellín into their work.

The pastoral theologian Edgard Beltran worked for CELAM in the planning of Medellín and participated actively in the meeting. In the 1970s, he started working with Hispanic pastoral leaders in the United States, a partnership that soon led to the development of processes of consultation and evangelization grounded in the vision of Vatican II and Medellín. These Encuentros, or encounters, used the see-judge-act method. The Encuentros—convened nationally in 1972, 1977, 1985, 2000 and 2018—have served as catalysts to assess the church’s institutional response to the fast-growing Hispanic presence. They affirm the influence of Hispanic Catholics in the building of the church in this corner of the world as well as the transformation of the larger U.S. society.

From Latin America to the World

The bishops who signed the “Pact of the Catacombs” in Rome most likely did not know where that commitment would take them. Yet they trusted the Holy Spirit in the same way St. John XXIII did as he convoked the Second Vatican Council that brought them together. For those who returned to Latin America, the spirit of the pact found life in Medellín.

Fifty years later, Medellín continues to inspire the church in Latin America and the rest of the world. Tens of thousands of Catholics committed to living the Gospel by serving the poor and promoting justice and liberation have lost their lives in Latin America, including leaders like Bishop Enrique Angelelli from Argentina, one of the signatories of the pact, and Archbishop Óscar Romero from El Salvador. Their blood is the seed of new Christians.

Many Catholics on the continent continue to work tirelessly to live out their missionary discipleship by serving the poor and those who are most vulnerable, promoting the whole person and changing those structures of sin

that prevent far too many people from flourishing. Their witness demonstrates the need for Medellín.

When Pope Francis speaks about a poor church for the poor, he echoes the best of Catholic social teaching and Latin American theology, sharing the heart of Jesus’ message. Fifty years ago, Medellín did likewise. A poor church, the bishops wrote at Medellín, “denounces the unjust lack of this world’s goods and the sin that it begets; preaches and lives in spiritual poverty, as an attitude of spiritual childhood and openness to the Lord; is herself bound to material poverty.” Medellín promoted participation, consultation and formation. The meeting itself was a fruitful exercise of synodality, and represents a church that went from being “a mirror church” to a “source church.” Pope Francis has emerged on the global stage as a church leader who affirms the importance of synodality and regularly proceeds in a synodal way.

In his passion for the truth of the Gospel, his invitation to be a poor church and to love the poor with preferential love, his respect for social movements and his respect for synodality, Pope Francis brings the best of Medellín as a gift to the world. Fifty years later, the message and wisdom of Medellín resonate vigorously with the experience of Catholics on all continents.

Hosffman Ospino is an associate professor of Hispanic ministry and religious education at Boston College. Rafael Luciani is an associate professor of theology at Boston College.

ONE

Buffalo Bayou overflows its banks near downtown Houston on Aug. 31, 2017, after Hurricane Harvey hit Texas with 4.5 feet of rain.

CNS photo/James Ramos, Texas Catholic Herald



YEAR AFTER HARVEY

*Texas' multicultural
megapolis pauses to take
stock and rebuild*

By J.D. Long-García

Next to the H-Mart in Houston's Chinatown, there is a seafood restaurant where most of the patrons speak Chinese. The busboy is from Central America. They serve Tsingtao, the most successful Chinese beer export. They also offer chicken wings and pepper shrimp served with lots of onions, garlic and two kinds of jalapeños.



A woman carries items from her flooded home in Houston, a growing city that is still coping with the biggest disaster recovery effort in Texas history.

It is not authentic Chinese food but a sort of Tex-Chinese. This food fusion is ubiquitous in the Houston area, which features not only Tex-Mex restaurants but a Latin-Asian food truck called Pho-jita Fusion and Korean spins on Southern comfort dishes like macaroni and cheese.

Down the street at the Chevron gas station, Pete, a security guard from Nigeria, has just turned away a panhandler who asked for \$5.

“Who in the world would give away \$5 for free?” Pete asks Ali, a clerk who immigrated from Pakistan.

“Well, God,” Ali says. They both laugh.

This is Houston

Houston anchors the fifth-largest metropolitan area in the United States, and despite a recent slowdown in growth, it is projected to overtake Chicago as the nation’s third largest city. Its many cultures make for a blend not found anywhere else in Texas. The city’s website is available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish and Vietnamese. According to 2011 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, just 54 percent of the city’s residents speak only English at home (compared with 80 percent of all U.S. residents).

In 1970, Houston’s population was 63 percent non-Hispanic white; now only 26 percent of its residents fit that category, with 44 percent Latino, 23 percent black and 6 percent Asian. In 2016, Mayor Sylvester Turner tweeted that Houston is “the most #diverse city in #America,” a claim that is open to debate, depending on how you mea-

sure things, but that does convey the variety of traditions held by today’s Houstonians.

In late August 2017, Hurricane Harvey took a toll on all of them—rich and poor, white and brown, city and suburb. The storm hit Texas with 4.5 feet of rain and winds of 130 miles per hour, leading to the largest disaster response in the state’s history, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Houston, nicknamed the Bayou City, was hit with the largest amount of rainwater ever recorded in the continental United States.

Houstonians are aware that less than a month later, Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico. But they cannot forget those days in August when the rains would not stop.

Holding Together a Neighborhood

“My dog learned how to swim that day,” Marta Vargas quips. Her family emigrated from Mexico when she was a child. She and her mother, also named Marta, had 27 people and seven dogs huddled on the second floor of their house in the Sagemont neighborhood of southeastern Houston during Harvey. The Vargases had family visiting, but neighbors who lived in single-story houses came, too. A man she had never met before was there and sat in a corner with his dog. He had been housesitting for his grandparents, who lived nearby.

When the rain began, Ms. Vargas’s father tried to dig a ditch in the backyard to channel the water away from



says. “Especially the elderly, undocumented, people with health issues, they’re trying to figure out what to do. We want to get people to their new normal.”

Many neighbors have not returned, and Mr. Johns says he can smell mold in many of the houses he visits.

Catholic Charities turned its parking lot into a recovery zone in the weeks following Harvey. The Knights of Columbus grilled food there, and throughout the city, for displaced people.

“Churches were where people dropped stuff off and where people came for help,” Mr. Johns says. Nearly 780,000 Texans evacuated their homes, and it could take more than 10 years for the area to recover fully. Catholic Charities reached out to everyone, Catholic or not, in many different languages.

Similarly, Vietnamese Martyrs Church, also in southeastern Houston, reached out to members of its parish, including many immigrants from Vietnam. Some still have nightmares about Hurricane Harvey, according to Bentley Huynh, a hospitality volunteer. Many have yet to have their homes fixed.

“Many people don’t have flood insurance,” he says. “I’ve lived here for 24 years, and I have never seen anything like this before. This time it was horrible.”

In the northern part of Houston, Sharon Ettinoffe, a parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Kashmere Gardens, estimates that as few as 20 percent of her neighbors have moved back after Harvey. Her neighborhood, abutting an industrial area and rail yards, began as a Czech community but now has mostly black and Latino residents.

“We lost our church, we lost our school, and we lost our parish office,” Ms. Ettinoffe says.

The area was also flooded during Tropical Storm Allison in 2001, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency helped people rebuild their homes but said they would not receive aid again unless they maintained flood insurance policies. Ms. Ettinoffe explains how one elderly couple had to choose between paying for flood insurance or medication. They chose the medicine, so they had no recourse after Harvey.

Other residents are living in houses with missing walls.

“I don’t care how much work is done, it’s just going to flood again,” Ms. Ettinoffe says, referring to a nearby bayou.

A Church Survives and Thrives

After the 9 a.m. Mass at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Spring, an unincorporated area a few miles north of Houston, the Rev. Norbert Maduzia Jr. saw that the water had risen to

the house. But the water rose, flooding several feet on the first floor.

“We didn’t know what to do,” Ms. Vargas says. The house lost electricity, and once the rain stopped, many of the people trapped there waded through the water for a half a mile to a shelter set up at a gas station on higher ground.

It is dangerous to walk through floodwaters in urban areas. It is hard to see what you are stepping on, and the floodwater can be mixed with sewer water. After Harvey, authorities instructed people to stay at their homes and wait for boats, but thousands ignored the warning.

The Vargas family lost three cars to the flood; Ms. Vargas’s father, a mechanic, fixed a fourth that was damaged. They lived in a hotel for seven months while their house was being repaired. The lack of affordable housing is an ongoing issue in Houston, and Harvey made it worse. When the Vargas family moved back home, Catholic Charities provided them with furniture, a washer and dryer, and mattresses.

Many neighbors do not know that assistance is available, she says. Some are undocumented immigrants and will not ask for help because they think they will get into trouble.

“It doesn’t feel the same,” Ms. Vargas says of life after Harvey. “My 5-year-old gets freaked out when it rains.”

Thousands are still in long-term recovery, according to Matt Johns, the director of the disaster and recovery program for Catholic Charities in Houston.

“They don’t know where they’re going to end up,” he

Everyone was worried about the building, but our pastor was worried about the people. ☹️



the church's porch. When he returned later, he found altar linens floating in nearly four feet of water in the sanctuary.

"The parishioners need to see this, but they can't get in here," Father Maduzia, a native of the city, recalls thinking. So he went on Facebook Live, sharing a video that now has 575,000 views.

"Flooding has been a part of my life throughout my life, and we just have never been attacked by a hurricane," he says. "It's always been others. But this time it's us, it's me."

The parish began celebrating Mass at schools and auditoriums before erecting a temporary structure—a big white tent—in its parking lot. Nine months later, on May 31, they are welcoming parishioners into their restored church for the rededication.

"You know what it's like to deal with insurance companies, and you know what it's like to deal with the government. You put the two together, and you get the chancery," Father Maduzia says to laughter, including from Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, the archbishop of Galveston-Houston, who was there for the rededication.

"You're back at home, and I want to congratulate you for your patience and perseverance," the cardinal says to the crowd as the rededication begins outside the church. He says it was "amazing" that the parish had restored the sanctuary in nine months.

"People have suffered greatly in this area, yet this church has moved forward," Cardinal DiNardo says. "It must be because it is built on the rock of Christ."

But some parishioners are still living on the second floors of their homes, says Father Maduzia. One parishioner told him recently she was excited not to have to do dishes in her bathtub anymore.

Gloria Aldridge, who sings in the choir, says people are still rebuilding their homes. Hurricane Harvey brought the third flood to hit the neighborhood situated along Cypress Creek in the last three years, she says, but this one was different.

"It was just complete devastation," Ms. Aldridge says. "You began to realize you had to trust people and reach out to them."

As the post-rededication cookie-and-lemonade reception thins out, Ms. Aldridge says the flood brought people together in a new way. "As these things happen, you have to get on your knees more," she says. "God needs to be a part of it."

Deacon Peter Olivier says the parish set up a volunteer effort immediately after the hurricane, even before addressing repairs to the church, to help people with "mucking out" hundreds of neighborhood homes before mold could set in. That meant removing all the damp parts of a home, including carpeting and drywall.

"People kept asking, 'Why are you not fixing the church?'" Deacon Olivier says, "and Father Maduzia would tell them, 'You are the church.' Everyone was worried about the building, but our pastor was worried about the people.

"We're a people for others," he says, adapting an expression popularized by Pedro Arrupe, S.J. "If anything, Harvey solidified that."

Protecting Houston's History

For four and half days, Melissa Kean could not leave her house near downtown Houston. She would wake up every morning to the pouring rain from Harvey.

"We were trapped. You couldn't restock food," she says, noting that while her house was not flooded, everything around it was.



CNS photo/James Ramos, Texas Catholic Herald

Parishioners arrive at the rededication Mass for St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Church. For months, Mass was held in a white tent on the damaged church's parking lot.

A few days after the storm, Ms. Kean, the university historian at Rice University, got an urgent call from a colleague, Joshua Furman. (Ms. Kean is also on the board of directors of America Media.) The Brays Bayou had flooded homes and synagogues in the historical Jewish neighborhoods of Meyerland and Willow Meadows.

“Everything had become like Kleenex,” Ms. Kean says of papers, photographs and books they found in United Orthodox Synagogues, a worship center in southwestern Houston.

Before they could store the documents in a freezer to help stop mold, the immediate solution was to use a hair dryer on the cool setting. The historians also placed wet materials between dry pieces of paper to try to preserve them.

The flooding from Harvey led Rice University to create a historical archive for the Jewish community, which has a long history in the city. Word spread through social media that the university was interested in families’ old belongings.

“For historians, the only way you get more data is for people to bring it to you,” Ms. Kean says. “People think no one wants that old junk. Well, it’s not junk to me and Josh [Furman].”

Dance cards, old ticket stubs, invitations for parties—they all capture what it was like to be alive at a given time, she says. They now have a Torah screen that was used on high holy days, made in 1927, along with scrapbooks, photographs going back to the 1890s, videotapes, yearbooks, pins and buttons.

“These little things allow you to see what Jewish [res-

idents] did for fun,” she says. “Not official documents but what you stuck in your pocket, like a wallet full of membership cards.”

“We launched this effort to make sure that the historical record and legacy of Houston’s Jewish community and Jewish communities all over South Texas will never be washed away or destroyed or lost,” Mr. Furman says. The night before he spoke to **America**, Mr. Furman had met with a man who had given the archive high school yearbooks, a record album of camp songs and his uncle’s Purple Heart medal.

“We’ve been at it for nine months, and people have already turned in some amazing stuff,” he says.

“It took a hurricane to start it, but once it did, it took on a life of its own,” Ms. Kean says.

Rice University also maintains the Houston Asian American Archive. The African American Library at the Gregory School also has an archive, and the University of Houston has a well-respected department of Hispanic studies.

“Diversity is so powerful, several communities had already started preserving their histories,” Ms. Kean says. “The hurricane renewed their appreciation for the need to collect. There is a bit of a boom in archiving in general in the city.”

In the wake of Harvey, the forward-looking city realized it had to protect its past.

‘No Boundaries’ in a Storm

Valerie and David Calvillo, who moved to Houston from the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas, are forming new routines

It doesn't feel the same. My 5-year-old gets freaked out when it rains. ☔☔

after Harvey. The couple, along with six of their eight kids—Ana, Teresita, Micah, Joaquin, Lázaro and Maris Stella—are gathered at St. Bartholomew in Katy, a city of about 16,000 just west of Houston, for confession. Mr. Calvillo is watching his younger children on the playground while Ms. Calvillo is with the teenagers in the confession line.

“You always think it’s going to happen to someone else,” Mr. Calvillo says. A lawyer, he had rushed home from an out-of-town trial to be with his family when Harvey hit.

“He made it back just in time to experience the storm with us!” Ms. Calvillo laughs. At first, the kids just played outside in the rain in their galoshes. But the rain did not stop. Inside, they played Monopoly, watched movies and did crafts for hours while it poured. Their cellphones would go off with tornado warnings every 15 to 30 minutes.

The flooding kept them from Sunday Mass, Mr. Calvillo says.

The family stored as many of their things as they could on the second floor. With four feet of water inside their home, they decided to wade through the chest-high flood to get to a relative’s house on higher ground.

They used air mattresses as rafts for their personal belongings, put important documents in Ziploc bags and placed their dog in a plastic kiddie pool. The older kids carried the younger ones on their backs and a neighbor came to help out. Nearly a year later, Mr. Calvillo still gets emotional telling the story.

The family lost their vehicles, so after a few nights, they rented a car and headed down to McAllen, Tex., where they had lived before moving to Houston. They stopped at Target for diapers, wipes and snacks.

“We’re the kind of family that always volunteers,” Ms. Calvillo says, noting they spent time assisting migrants at the border with Norma Pimentel, M.J., the executive director of Catholic Charities in the Rio Grande Valley. “Now it’s us. We had nothing, and we were the ones reaching out for

help, the ones that were displaced from our home.”

“It’s a punch in the gut,” Mr. Calvillo chimes in.

Strake Jesuit College Preparatory, where their eldest son, Lázaro, is a student, stepped in to help.

The school had closed in anticipation of the storm; after it hit, the staff gathered to plan their response, according to John Fahy, the assistant principal for student affairs. They established a phone bank and called all the school families.

Students and staff were ready to act and started helping families muck out their homes, brought them food and helped them move, Mr. Fahy says. One family donated their second home for the remainder of the year, so the Calvillos had a place to stay. Once they were done helping a Strake family, the soccer team would just head to the next house over and ask if they needed a hand.

Mike and Sherry Bordelon, Strake parents, teamed up with the school and Mr. Bordelon’s company to provide materials—like masks, goggles and claw hammers—to those who were cleaning out their homes after flooding.

“The hurricane really brought out that there aren’t any boundaries in Houston,” Mr. Bordelon says, referring to how it hit Houstonians of all socioeconomic statuses.

Those who live in West Houston, near major reservoirs, were hit hard after the rain stopped. That was the case with the Cassidys, another Strake Jesuit family.

“This house never got flooded before,” Patrick Cassidy says as he walks through the first floor of his recently restored home. Once Harvey’s rains had stopped, it appeared that his house had been spared. The waterline did not pass the Cassidys’ doorstep, though it did flood the streets and homes of neighbors closer to the Buffalo Bayou. Once the rain had stopped, Mr. Cassidy saw the water receding.

But the Barker and Addicts reservoirs, built decades ago to protect Houston from flooding, were beyond capacity. The Army Corps of Engineers had to release water to prevent it from spilling. That led to flooding in more than 9,000 homes and business by the reservoirs, The Houston Chronicle reported, including the Cassidy home.

“This was a biohazard site,” Mr. Cassidy says, noting that while many will remember the photographs of the Harvey aftermath, few could imagine the smell.

A volunteer with the Cajun Navy, a Louisiana group that helped Harvey victims in Houston, picked up Mr. Cassidy’s wife, Beth, their youngest son and their dog in a rowboat. Mr. Cassidy and his older sons stayed behind, going back and forth to a friend’s house with supplies. They wore their chest waders, which they had previously used for hunting. He had to show ID when he came back into his neighborhood. The

National Guard had set up a station to protect against looting.

The floor creaks as Mr. Cassidy walks over to his fridge, sparingly stocked with grapes and water. The Cassidys replaced their floors and had work done on their walls. The fridge does not fit in its place quite as well as it used to.

“What am I going to complain about? That my refrigerator door only opens so far?” he says. “As difficult as it is for my neighbors, this would be the nicest neighborhood in Puerto Rico.”

The family was not using some of the items they lost in the flood, Mr. Cassidy says. “It’s a shame—these items could have benefited someone else,” he says, adding that he has grown to appreciate both what was lost and what was unnecessary.

Mr. Cassidy points out houses abandoned or still under construction as he drives through his neighborhood in his S.U.V. But this has long been a city of constant change: Even before Harvey, 20 percent of Houston’s residents had been living in their homes for less than a year (compared with 15 percent of all U.S. residents).

Some of the homes have been raised a few feet above the ground in preparation for the next flood. Others still

have debris piled outside. Some, like half-eaten fish, are missing the entire first floor, the second story standing on a wooden skeleton. Others were leveled altogether, leaving empty lots.

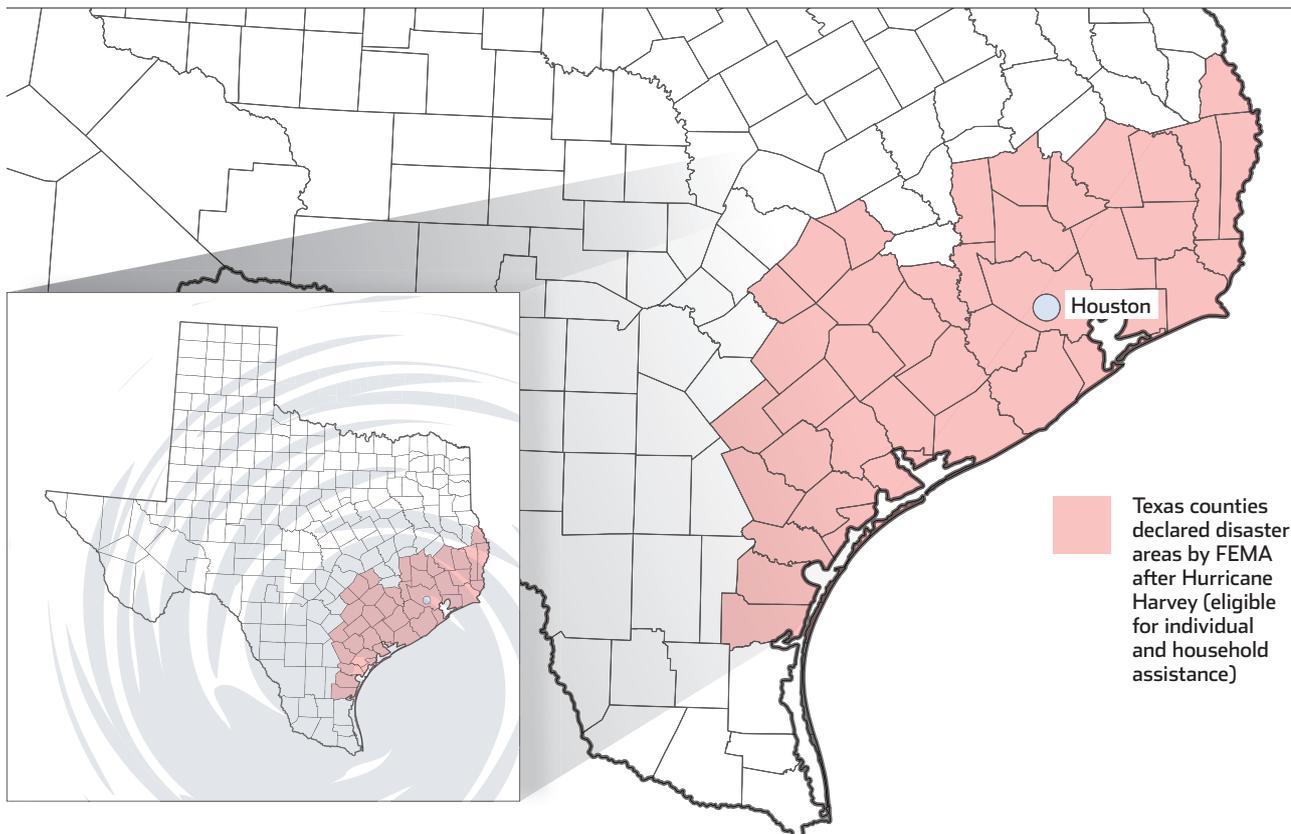
“There’s more people out of their houses than in them,” Mr. Cassidy says of people in his neighborhood. “Some couldn’t deal with it, so they sold their homes altogether.”

Strake Jesuit families began bringing meals to displaced families, which were “delicious,” he says. Mr. Cassidy had helped some neighbors evacuate, and Ms. Cassidy helped out in her role at St. Cecilia Church.

In their neighborhood, located in the “energy corridor” of Houston, most residents are professionals or retired, Mr. Cassidy says. The nearby Stratford High School is 24 percent Latino and 11 percent black.

“In Houston, there’s no other side of the tracks. Kids go to the same school, so we’ve always had integration,” Mr. Cassidy says. “But I do think there’s a much greater sense of gratitude for family and friendship and community after Harvey.”

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



GUILT TIPS

Helping Catholics who struggle with scrupulosity

By Rachel Ehmke

There is an episode of “30 Rock” in which Tracy Morgan’s character says he is converting to Catholicism. He thinks he has found a loophole for continuing his wild lifestyle: confession. It is that old chestnut that a Catholic can keep sinning and confessing and sinning again, totally carefree. But Alec Baldwin’s character, Jack Donaghy, throws cold water on the idea:

That’s not how it works, Tracy. Even though there is the whole confession thing, that’s no free pass because there is a crushing guilt that comes with being a Catholic. Whether things are good or bad or you’re simply eating tacos in the park, there is always the crushing guilt.

I am not sure where the idea of the neurotically guilty Catholic comes from. To outsiders, it might seem like we have a morbid fixation on sin or that Catholicism has not fully shed its medieval reputation—with its history of hair shirts and self-flagellation. In “30 Rock,” the Irish-Catholic Jack mimes flogging himself as he warns Tracy off the faith.

But for some believers, Catholic guilt is not a joke. Taken to the extreme, it can become an obsessive-compulsive disorder, also known as scrupulosity. A number of famous Catholics have writ-

ten about or struggled with scrupulosity, including St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Alphonsus Liguori and the soon-to-be-sainted Archbishop Óscar Romero. Today, helping people who struggle with scrupulosity has become a mission of the Redemptorist Order, which maintains a website and monthly newsletter called *Scrupulous Anonymous*.

A person with scrupulosity might fixate on having done something to offend God. She might think that the prayer she just said was not heartfelt enough or was said incorrectly. She might have unwanted blasphemous thoughts and worry that those thoughts are a mortal sin or indicate spiritual depravity. Even if she is pretty sure that she did not do anything wrong, the needling doubt wears away at her. St. Ignatius called it “making it make out sin where there is not sin” in his *Spiritual Exercises*.

To alleviate their anxiety, people prone to scrupulosity might try to repeat prayers or perform acts of penance. But their efforts often become chores without any of the spiritual meaning and in the end only increase their distress. Eventually, their anxiety can even estrange them from their church.

Scrupulous Anonymous features letters sent by men and women worried about the state of their souls. Missing Mass while traveling is a recurring concern. One person writes: “Summer





FOR PEOPLE WITH SCRUPULOSITY, GOING TO CONFESSION CAN CREATE A PERFECT STORM.

travel makes me anxious. What if we're far from a church on Sunday or travel reservations conflict with the Mass schedule? Every summer I find myself worrying about mortal sin instead of enjoying the time with my family."

Another common question is what to do when someone receives Communion, and you think they might not be eligible for it. "We have a family wedding coming up," one person writes. "Many extended members of my family no longer go to church. If they try to receive Communion at the nuptial Mass, what is my responsibility? To avoid unpleasantness at the wedding, should I make a general announcement, perhaps at the rehearsal dinner, reminding everyone about the rules?"

Another asks if it is a mortal sin to accidentally hit an animal while driving. "I read that serious cruelty to animals is a mortal sin. When I see things on the road that could be small rodents, snakes, or turtles, I try to avoid them, but sometimes it's impossible. Is that cruel, and therefore a mortal sin?"

One particularly poignant letter comes from an older person, who says: "I'm seventy years old. Lately I'm plagued by memories of serious sins, even some from my childhood. I can't remember whether I confessed them or whether I tried to minimize their seriousness in my description to the priest. I'm trying to trust in God and leave the past behind. What should I do?"

THE PATRON SAINT OF CONFESSORS

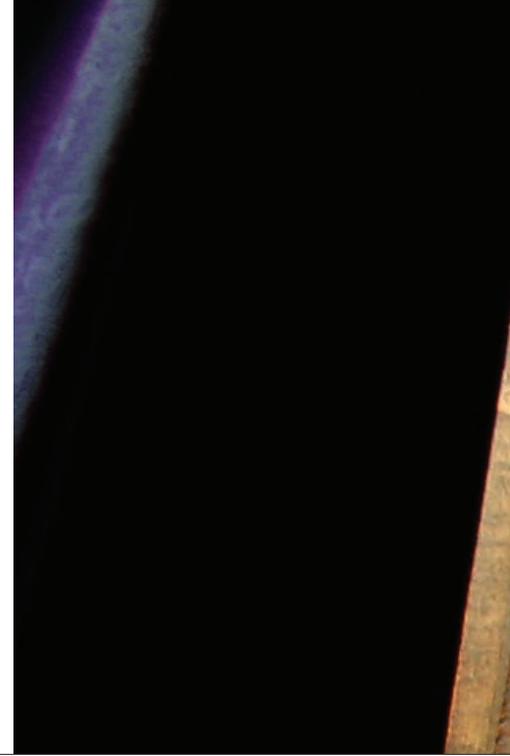
A common symptom of O.C.D. is confessing your bad thoughts to others for reassurance. Psychologists who treat

people with O.C.D. help patients learn to stop confessing their worries because this leads only to more anxiety. But for scrupulous Catholics, for whom confessing is a sacrament as well as an impulse, avoiding confession altogether can seem like a nonstarter—especially if you are already anxious about sinning.

For people with scrupulosity, going to confession can create a perfect storm. For example, a man might confess a blasphemous thought to his priest but be dissatisfied with the reassurance he gets in response. So he might ask his priest about the same issue again and again, or he might try asking another priest for a second opinion. The spiritual meaning of the sacrament is lost, and the person is being driven by his anxiety, not his faith.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, the patron saint of confessors and founder of the Redemptorist Order, who struggled with scrupulosity himself, gave this advice:

For the consolation of timid and scrupulous souls, I will here state that, according to the common opinion of theologians, when a soul that fears God and hates sin is in doubt whether she gave consent to a bad thought, she is not bound, as long as she is not certain of having given consent, to confess it: for it is then morally certain that she has not consented to it. Had she really fallen into grievous sin she would have no doubt about it.





St. Alphonsus also emphasized the importance of trusting one’s confessor. Even if the confessor is wrong, trusting what he says is following the direction of God.

His intimate understanding of scrupulosity is perhaps why he is so identified with compassionate confessors and why the order he founded continues ministering to those with this affliction to this day. Father Thomas Santa, a Redemptorist priest and the director of Scrupulous Anonymous, also leads workshops on scrupulosity for pastoral ministers and professional therapists.

In a recent blog post, Father Santa wrote: “At any given moment, we are attacked by the idea that we are not what we are supposed to be, nor what we hoped to be, not to mention what we professed or believed ourselves to be.” He was writing about scrupulosity, but you do not need to have O.C.D. to have these thoughts. In fact, they sound a lot like Catholic guilt—but it is bigger than that, too. These qualms are part of the human condition.

If the guilt has not reached a clinical level—if it is simply the sign of an active conscience—it might not be such a bad thing. Maybe it will make us take more care in our interactions with others or have more sympathy when we see people struggling. But if we find ourselves worrying too much—if misplaced guilt sucks the joy out of life’s simple pleasures, even eating tacos in the park—that is a different matter. But that, too, is very human, and there is help.

Rachel Ehmke is a freelance writer based in New York.

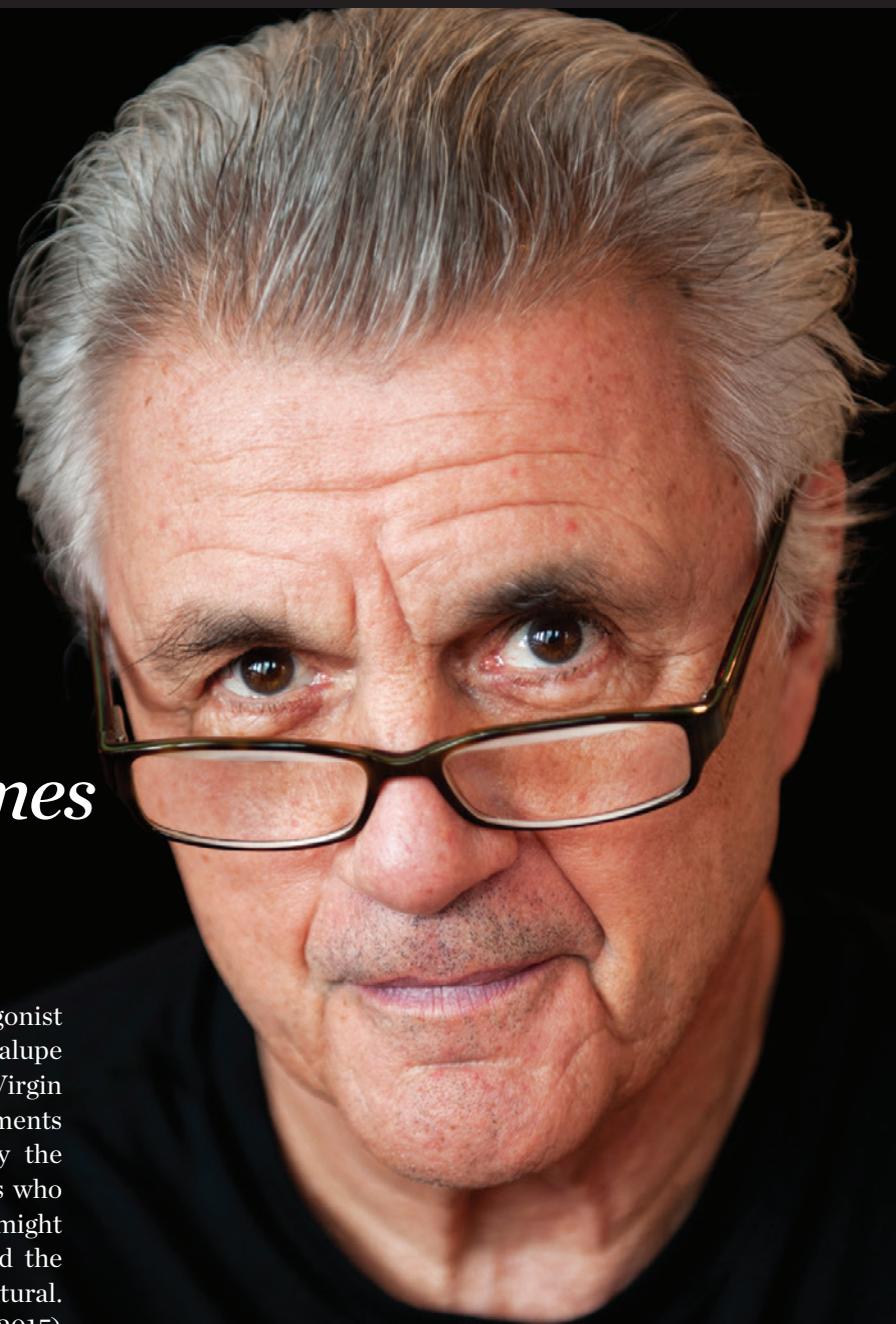
John Irving Wrestles With Religious Themes New and Old

By James T. Keane

His most recent novel features a protagonist named Juan Diego, whose sister Guadalupe experiences childhood visions of the Virgin Mary. As in his dozen other novels, moments of redemption are often punctuated by the bloody sacrifices of important characters who give life or limb so that the innocent might live. Statues weep, miracles abound, and the supernatural seems more real than the natural. Other characters in *Avenue of Mysteries* (2015) include a Jesuit scholastic, a slum priest and enough strife between the sexual teachings of the Catholic Church and the lives of the characters to light a trash dump ablaze. And, as in many of his other novels, Graham Greene is quoted: “There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.”

John Irving, Catholic novelist?

Continued on Page 43



AMERICA'S GUIDE TO RETREATS

Many of our readers are curious about retreats. What does one do on a retreat? Where does one go? What are some good retreat houses? Simply put, a retreat is an extended period of prayer, usually done in silence, and usually at a retreat house, where a team of spiritual directors helps you find God in your prayer. There are also different kinds of retreats. On a directed retreat, a person meets with a spiritual director on a daily basis to discuss what is happening in prayer. A guided retreat focuses more on one topic (say, women's spirituality) and offers presentations as well as opportunities to meet with a director a few times. Preached retreats consist in listening to presentations and praying on your own, but with less opportunity for direction.

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Bellarmino Jesuit Retreat House

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Ph: (847) 381-1261; Email: info@jesuitretreat.org

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Campion Conference & Renewal Center

319 Concord Road, Weston, MA 02493
Ph: (781) 419-1337
Website: www.campioncenter.org; Email: acoopponi@campioncenter.org

Campion Conference & Renewal Center is a place of hospitality and encounter in the Jesuit tradition that has conference spaces for groups as small as 10 people and as large as 200 and offers retreat experiences from one day to 30 days.



Ignatius House Jesuit Retreat Center

6700 Riverside Drive, NW, Atlanta, GA 30328
Ph: (404) 255-0503
Website: www.ignatiushouse.org; Email: registrar@ignatiushouse.org

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5361 South Milford Road, Milford, OH 45150
Ph: (513) 248-3500
Website: www.jesuitspiritualcenter.com; Email: reservations@jesuitspiritualcenter.com

Celebrating 90 years of retreat ministry, the Jesuit Spiritual Center, located outside Cincinnati, sits on 37 beautiful acres along a scenic river, providing a tranquil place for prayer and renewal. In the Ignatian tradition, weekend conference retreats and week-long, personally directed retreats are offered year-round. Visit www.jesuitspiritualcenter.com for our complete retreat listing.



Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth

P.O. Box 223, 501 N. Church Road, Wernersville, PA 19565
Ph: (610) 670-3642
Website: www.jesuitcenter.org; Email: mleonowitz@jesuitcenter.org

The Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, situated on 240 acres in Wernersville, Pa., is a place of natural beauty, welcoming quiet and spiritual sustenance. We offer a variety of retreats and programs based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola for Roman Catholics, Christians of every denomination and seekers.



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A Ministry of the Society of St. Ursula
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Ph: (845) 876-4178; Website: www.linwoodspiritualctr.org

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Ph: (519) 824-1250 ext. 266
Website: www.loyolahouse.com; Email: registration@ignatiusguelph.ca

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Ph: (914) 941-4455

Website: www.mariandale.org; Email: info@mariandale.org

The Mariandale Center offers retreats, programs, and workshops in the arts, environmental protection, and spirituality year-round at our beautiful 61-acre Hudson Valley center. We also host group retreats for nonprofit organizations.



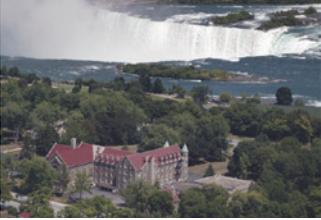
Mercy Center Burlingame

2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010

Ph: (650) 340-7474

Website: www.mercy-center.org; Email: mc@mercywmw.org

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Ph: (855)-656-4113

Website: www.carmelniagara.com; Email: mtcarmel@carmelniagara.com

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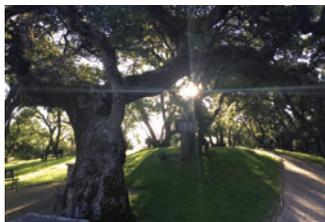
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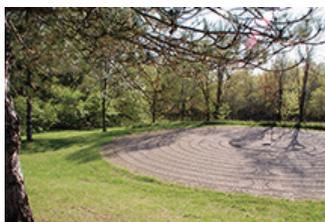
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Not by a long shot, according to the foremost authority, Irving himself. “I continue, as many Catholics you know continue, to rail against the rules and doctrine of the church,” Mr. Irving told me during an interview at his office in Toronto in December 2017. *Avenue of Mysteries* might seem steeped in Catholicism, but he makes a distinction between his characters and his own belief—and notes that it would be well-nigh impossible for a writer to try to write a novel about mysticism in the Mexican context and leave out Marian devotions:

What I wanted to do in this novel was to make the miraculous very real, while the institution of the church itself is severely criticized. Not unlike my habit of writing ending-driven novels, I set myself a kind of situation in which the Virgin Mary herself would have to participate. She would in some way have to make a gesture to say, “Let him go.”

It is impossible to spend even as much time as I spent in Mexico and in those basilicas, those cathedrals, those churches, in the presence of those various virgins, and the many people you see on their knees asking something of them—it is impossible not to feel the strength of faith in those virgins so many people have.

And truth be told, perhaps the most Greenian aspect of *Avenue of Mysteries*, as in many of Irving’s other novels, is not the religious faith of his protagonists but their topsy-turvy

struggle to navigate their sexuality in various cultures—religious and otherwise—where the acceptable limits of physical desire are strictly defined or the subject of furious dispute. His sprawling 1978 novel *The World According to Garp*, with its prescient depiction of the future of sexual identity politics (and perhaps fiction’s first positive portrayal of a transsexual in the character of Roberta Muldoon, a former N.F.L. star who transitions to a woman), set the stage for this theme in much of his later fiction. And after all, the character of Juan Diego in *Avenue of Mysteries* lives out his adult years trying to decide which pill is better for him to take—his beta-blockers or his Viagra.

In this vein, I was reminded after our interview of something George W. Hunt, S.J., once wrote in the pages of **America**, regarding the fiction of John Updike: “Both the church and sexuality are reminders of man’s ambiguity, both are incentives for his self-transcendence, both enjoin ‘life’ commitments. Therefore, the church and sexuality are legitimate reciprocal metaphors.”

Despite the novel’s setting in the uber-Catholic realms of Mexico and the Philippines, Irving says his immersion in the world of mysticism is not that far from his approach in earlier novels—and his distaste for institutional Christianity is not a rejection of belief. “I think it would be a misreading of religion or faith in my work to say that I disparage it,” he commented. “I disparage human institutions. Schools, governments, churches—all of them. I disparage the fallibility of man-made institutions and man-made rules.”

Now 76 years old, Irving has kept an athlete’s physique from his days

wrestling and coaching the sport, another trope his readers will immediately recognize in his novels. A wrestling mat and free weights occupy a corner of his office. He maintains a strenuous writing schedule, working both on a new novel and on screenplay projects. He writes longhand on yellow legal pads, using a computer only for research and notes.

Irving has publicly acknowledged his favorite writers to be Dickens, Robinson Davies, Thomas Hardy, Günter Grass and the magic realists like Gabriel García Márquez, but he is omnivorous in his consumption of literature. The books scattered across a large table in his office formed a contradiction. On the one hand they seemed a random selection of topics and genres; on the other, they provided a series of guideposts to Irving’s own fictional themes. Among them were Ron Hansen’s novel *The Kid*; the English-Canadian novelist Kathleen Winter’s 2010 book about an intersex child, *Annabel*; an issue of *Amateur Wrestling News*; a collection of Christmas stories written in German (Irving studied in Vienna as a young man, an experience reflected in his early fiction); and a massive tome of Bob Dylan’s song lyrics from the last half-century.

Irving’s apparent youthfulness can make it a shock to realize that his first novel, *Setting Free the Bears*, was published half a century ago. He rose to international prominence a decade later with *The World According to Garp*, which won the National Book Award for its paperback edition in 1980 and was later made into a famous movie starring Robin Williams, Glenn Close and John Lithgow (as Roberta Muldoon). In the following

years he scored critical and commercial successes with novels like *The Hotel New Hampshire*, *The Cider House Rules* and *Son of the Circus*. His next novel, tentatively titled *Darkness as a Bride* (a line from Shakespeare’s “Measure for Measure,” he noted: “If I have to die, I will meet the darkness as a bride, and hug it in my arms.”) will be his 14th, along with several non-fiction and short-story collections. Irving’s screenplays—he writes with an eye toward both the page and the screen—have also won him accolades, including an Academy Award in 2000 for his screenplay adaptation of *The Cider House Rules*.

Irving was raised a Congregationalist in New Hampshire and is not a member of any organized religious congregation, but he is open and loquacious on the subject of religion, prompting me to ask if Pope Francis’s emphasis on popular religiosity, and his call that the church focus less on sexual morality than on evangelization, had nuanced Irving’s opinion of the Catholic Church. Not really: “To say that I like Pope Francis a lot more than I cared for Pope Benedict [XVI] or John Paul II probably goes without saying,” Irving commented. “He strikes me as a vastly nicer guy. What you call his populism is surely a part of it.” But Irving retains a gimlet eye for the institution, in large part because of the Catholic Church’s pro-life stance and policies. Because of the centrality of abortion to the plot of *The Cider House Rules* (both the book and the movie) as well as Irving’s outspoken advocacy, even many who are unfamiliar with his writings know him as a forceful public proponent of legal abortion.

“I remain dubious when [Pope Francis] has said that he believes we, the church in general, have emphasized too much the gay marriage issue and the abortion rights issue—which so many, as he admits, good and practicing Catholics are on the liberal side of,” Irving said. “I don’t disparage—and I welcome—his likeability. I do not see, however, the rules regarding the subjecting of women to childbirth [changing].” If anything, Irving continued, he saw the possibility of a change in church teaching on as “more likely than any giving-in on the abortion issue. Which, especially in Third World countries, puts so many poor and disadvantaged women in a minority and subservient role...I would not want to be born a girl in a Third World economy where the Catholic Church is calling the shots.”

The institution aside, I wondered, was there still a Catholic imagination that informed Irving’s work? His protagonists—priapic though they often be—also regularly undergo a conversion experience that makes them realize they need not to be heroes so much as to be the willing instruments of a higher purpose: the classic denouement of the Catholic novel. Did he see parallels between his writing and that aesthetic sense?

“I would caution that the parallels to this motif, as you put it, of the Catholic imagination, [exist] in many 19th century novels, and in most old-fashioned literary work, where any kind of odyssey or mission of accomplishment is involved,” Irving commented. “In those 19th-century novels as well as in Shakespeare’s plays, this formative thing happens to someone, no surprise, at a formative age.” And that formative moment is

often a spiritual epiphany as well:

Yes, there is a kind of hellish passage that makes some young person the adult he or she will or does become, and I certainly wouldn’t deny that there are many spiritual parallels to this. St. Ignatius not only survived the cannonball, he famously said that he would sacrifice his life to save the sins of a single prostitute on a single night. Well, that’s extreme. But you gotta give a damn for that.

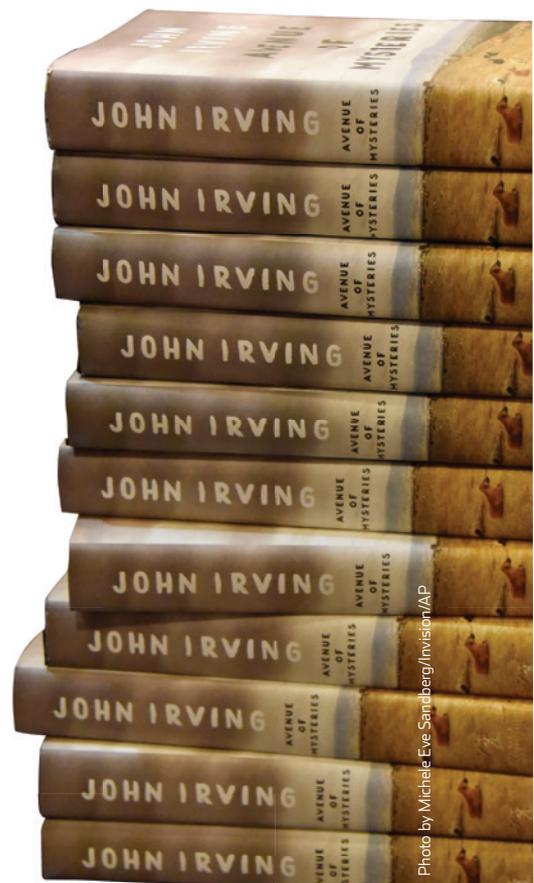


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Love, Laughter & Living Saints: Short Stories of Catholic School Days & 50 Years of Parish Happenings

by the Rev. Charles J. Cummings, retired priest, Diocese of Scranton, Pa.

Grassy Branch Pentecostal Church Electric Oscillating Fan

By William Woolfitt

the anointing falls, a wind that hits, stirs up, limbers everyone, some sway like dogwoods some sail down the aisles, crumple in heaps the church rocks and reels, Sister Mae testifies, there is crying and hollering that rises, rises, then recedes, there is hush, faint sobbing, you hear the still small voice of the electric oscillating fan, the buzz that stirs the stale air, *do this* it says, *abide* it says, it cools the back of your neck a moment, then turns and you nearly flee this ravished place you smell wood, the walls trapping heat, the pine benches, the sap, you smell bodies, sweat, dark circles, the men damp, the women damp, a trace of Ivory soap, bodies that work with coal and slate, deer meat and grease, bodies that smell like their work, hand over your nose you smell them stronger, *them a part of you, they are you now*, the still small hum of the fan again, the stirring, the cool, while it hums on you, you stay

William Woolfitt is the author of three poetry collections: *Beauty Strip*, *Charles of the Desert* and *Spring Up Everlasting*.

Irving is not a member of any organized congregation, but he is open and loquacious on the subject of religion. ●●

for the conversion stories of Catholic saints. “What can I say? I do admire the tenacity—in St. Francis’ case, in St. Ignatius’ case, and in the case of many characters in fiction,” he commented. “Tribulations, suffering, even the self-inflicted kind, have long been not only teaching experiments and, in the long run, good for us and educative, but in both in the athletic world and the religious world they are considered almost essential necessary sacrifices to meaning what you say you mean, and to being able to do anything worth doing.”

“I sometimes think the very definition of heroism or a hero in a novel or a play does have an almost religious definition.”

What is next for Irving after *Darkness as a Bride*? A return to Garp, this time as a five-part television miniseries. Because the world of sexual politics has changed so dramatically over 50 years in the North American context, I asked, would the character of Roberta Muldoon be different in the miniseries? Yes, said Irving: She will be the deserving focus of the story:

She is the point of view that you, the reader, are mostly in. She’s the guiding force of that family. And it’s her death,

Roberta’s, that is the last death knell of that novel. She’s the only character in the novel who loves Jenny and Garp equally. Almost everyone else is more on one of their sides than the other. And despite the extreme difficulty of what she’s doing, the transition in her life that she is making, she’s also one of the most normal and least hateful characters in the novel.... She was like the sexual arbiter in a novel about sexual hatred and sexual contention.

This focus—on the defiant outcast who proves to be the moral center of his or her universe—has never been particularly heavy-handed in Irving’s fiction, with the result that the reader (and the interviewer) can feel at times that he is as playful with his characters and his themes as he is deadly serious. On the subject of belief, Irving is well-schooled despite his skepticism. “In school and university I took every academic course in religion and the history of religions,” he told me. “Because I was always interested in the power of belief and what it was that people believed in, without feeling that I much resembled a believer myself. In the same vein, I

would say that I’m often as resistant to the confidence of atheists as I am to the confidence of true believers.” In fact, Irving noted, he felt the two groups shared some core characteristics:

I find the most outspoken atheists and true believers also have in common the desire to bring you into their fold. It is not sufficient for them to have their beliefs and to allow you to have yours. It is necessary that they bring you on board. Pot smokers are a lot like that too.

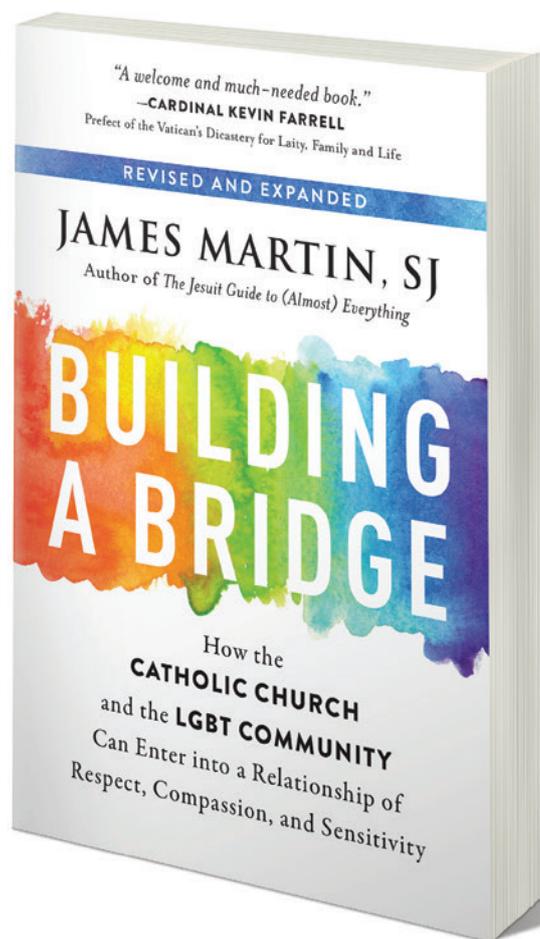
This remains a curious dichotomy in Irving’s thought and fiction: He seems a profoundly religious writer whose instinct is nevertheless to reject, resist or complicate the role of religion in public and private life. Is he a gadfly? A natural mystic? In a 2015 review of *Avenue of Mysteries* in The New York Times, Dwight Garner noted that there is a bit of Irving’s fellow septuagenarian, the musician John Prine, in his fiction: “He’s got a secret, if not an illegal, smile.”

James T. Keane, *senior editor*.
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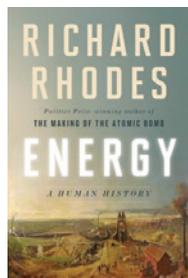
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From fire to fusion: the story of a species

By Christiana Zenner



Energy
A Human History
By Richard Rhodes
Simon & Schuster
480p \$30

The renowned historical author Richard Rhodes has written what aspires to be an authoritative history of human energy generation, spanning wood-gathering and whaling, coal and petroleum, sun and wind, water and nuclear power. An erudite storyteller with a knack for enlivening historical personalities, contexts and technical operations, Rhodes charts a four-part investigation into how energy sources have been directed toward creating heat, light and propulsion. Consistent themes rise to the surface amid the 20 chapters—including the importance of infrastructure in seemingly every form of energy production and the challenge of the intermittency problem across a range of energy platforms.

Overall, *Energy* succeeds as a de-

scriptive tome that lays out numerous historical, biographical and mechanical intricacies of energy innovation in England and the United States and thus deepens readers' understanding of forces that have shaped the modern world. It is, however, less successful as a prescriptive guidebook that draws on those lessons learned to intimate possible courses of action for how to grapple with "the great challenge of the twenty-first century," namely, "limiting global warming while simultaneously providing energy for a world population not only increasing in number but also advancing from subsistence to prosperity." (The ecologist Vaclav Smil's renowned books on energy production and Paul Hawken's *Drawdown* project are better suited to that task.)

To be fair, Rhodes offers this book primarily as a history of energy and not as a practical sourcebook or guide for the future. Even so, he recognizes that "today's challenges are the legacies of historic transitions" and describes his intention "to enliven the debate and clarify choices" by filling in "the rich *human* history behind today's energy challenges." Rhodes's

preferred historical approach is biographical- evocative, offering detailed archival resources and micro-histories of individual human beings behind technological innovation. To humanize the history of energy innovation is an intriguing task, one that extends far beyond the oft-invoked James Watt. Rhodes introduced me to many figures of whom I was previously unaware, and I was drawn to the artful ways he integrates these mechanical innovators with contemporaneous developments in science (like chemistry and geology) as well as the rise to prominence of august scientific guilds like the Royal Academy. He is also expert at drawing illustrative turns of phrase. Particularly fascinating were the chapter on whaling, the descriptions of steam engine development, the history of kerosene markets and his analyses of nuclear activism.

It is, of course, entirely true that the landscape of energy sources and uses would be radically different today were it not for the lives of these white men of science and technology who struggled and prospered in England and the United States. Yet I was also left with a distinct sense that *Energy* fails sufficient-

ly to account for the massive influence of structures of political and economic domination that have undergirded the possibility of energy extraction, promulgation and development. While *Energy* does on several occasions note that Europeans' acquisitions of land inhabited by indigenous peoples were conducted under unfair terms, he also at times seems to imply that the interior of North America was functionally uninhabited: As canals and railroads "penetrated the American wilderness and fostered its settlement," he writes, "these new people and places needed lighting." More attention needs to be paid to the self-justifying expansionist social and economic philosophy that characterized the notion of Manifest Destiny.

Indeed, a human history of energy must include more than the individual or biographical. It should also include analyses of political, legal and economic structures that have undergirded certain trajectories of energy development. Much more attention needs to be paid specifically to capitalism, colonialism and resource expropriation, as well as to the vast world beyond England and the United States. Useful companion volumes that shed greater light on such aspects of history are *Fossil Capital*, by Andreas Malm, and *The Great Derangement*, by Amitav Ghosh.

What of so-called renewables? Compared with the attention given to other sources of energy, the history and current status of solar and wind is paltry (see *Drawdown*, by Paul Hawken, for an antidote). Rhodes treats water—especially hydropower—in somewhat greater detail, but the characterization of hydropower as renewable or "clean" is suspect here and elsewhere. Large dams carry massive consequences for population displacement, ecological niche de-

struction and climate change, and have long-term implications for the renewability of groundwater sources.

Nuclear power is one place where *Energy* really shines—no accident, given that Rhodes has written several books on the development of atomic technologies and related topics. In fact, by the end of the book, I fervently wished that Rhodes had been willing to give more prominence to his convictions from the opening pages of the book, because *Energy* does have a prescriptive (if buried) thesis: Nuclear power is one part of a solution to global warming.

To those who would find nuclear energy threatening, Rhodes analyzes the history of antinuclear activism as a phenomenon deriving from what he considers to be scientifically indefensible social anxieties—for example, fears "of radiation and misunderstanding of its effects were powerful drivers of antinuclear sentiment." He adds that such "fear was exacerbated by the Damoclean sword of nuclear war that hung over the world in the long years of the Cold War, as well as by the three accidents that have occurred at nuclear power plants"—Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima Daiichi. Rhodes also argues that these accidents "need not have happened," and they can more rightly be viewed as failures of governance or management than of technology.

While the finer points of such an argument can be debated—technology is always mediated and managed by human institutions given to entropy—Rhodes is correct that nuclear power offers a very dramatic productive capacity relative to frequency of accidents.

More promisingly (if also parenthetically), Rhodes briefly describes the current status and mechanisms of nuclear fusion, which—compared to

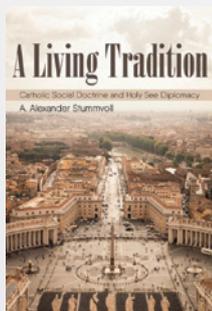
fission—could offer a different, potentially cleaner source of energy for the future. "Controlled thermonuclear fusion—harnessing the fusion of light elements rather than the fission of heavy elements—is a hard problem," Rhodes notes, because it requires temperatures in the millions of degrees. "As of 2018, no experimental fusion reactor has yet advanced beyond breakeven—meaning produced any net energy beyond the energy supplied to run the reactor."

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Commonwealth Fusion Systems are working on this very problem, with the hope that it could serve as a cleaner source of energy in coming years.

Energy is an eminently readable and enjoyable book, one that almost feels like an extended evening chat with a well-read and lively great-uncle. As a history of important figures whose innovations were swept up into the dynamics of energy production in England and the United States, it is a volume from which individual chapters could be easily and usefully excerpted for teaching purposes. The shape of energy production in the 21st century will be conditioned partly by these legacies, even as it also remains to be written by current and future generations.

And there are, of course, lessons to be drawn from the past. If, as Rhodes notes, "United States energy consumption reached 70 percent wood in 1870, shifting to 70 percent coal by 1900," then at least one such lesson is that dramatic energy transitions are, in fact, possible—even if the conditions of their possibility are myriad and the consequences of their deployment as yet unknown.

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



A Living Tradition
Catholic Social Doctrine and Holy See Diplomacy
By A. Alexander Stummvoll
Cascade Books
218p \$28

Prudent and pragmatic

A. Alexander Stummvoll's *A Living Tradition* is a much-needed book. Since Sept. 11, 2001, the place of religion in international affairs has been widely debated, with most of the ink spilt on discussions of Islam. Studies of the Catholic social tradition, of Vatican diplomacy and of church-inspired social movements can all be readily found on their own, but no work has brought them together quite as well as Stummvoll's. The importance of this volume is particularly notable at this moment in international diplomacy because, in Douglas Johnston's phrase, religion has been "the missing dimension in statecraft."

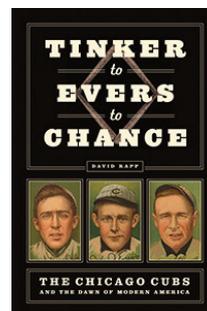
Catholicism is deserving of special study in diplomatic realms not only because of the church's transnational organization and size or the Holy See's status as a sovereign diplomatic actor, but also because of its intricately developed body of social thought. *A Living Tradition* examines the interplay between the Catholic social tradition and Vatican diplomacy. Stummvoll notes that Vatican diplomacy is "prudent and pragmatic" and disposed to make compromises in international

affairs because of its commitment to the international order. The teachings of the church on social issues, in Stummvoll's view, provide less of a map for the church's diplomacy than a set of compass bearings that give it direction.

I noted Stummvoll's use of the phrase "Catholic Social Doctrine" instead of "Catholic Social Teaching," a usage that places him solidly among scholars who have historically stressed the unchanging nature of Catholic truth. Had the author studied as much theology as international relations theory, he would have understood that while some Catholic social teaching has remained constant, much of it has changed. This is because of the strong stress on historical consciousness during the Second Vatican Council, with the notion of "reading the signs of the times," and with Blessed Pope Paul VI's assignment of that duty to subcommunities within the church, making social teaching one element in Christian social praxis.

Another added value of this book can be found in its extensive case studies of the Vietnam War, the fall of communism in Poland, U.N. conferences on population and women, and campaigns for jubilee-year debt relief.

Drew Christiansen, S.J., a former editor in chief of *America*, is the Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Global Development at Georgetown University.



Tinker to Evers to Chance
The Chicago Cubs and the Dawn of Modern America
David Rapp
University of Chicago Press
336p \$27.50

Six four three

The 1908 season marked the end of one era and the beginning of another for the Chicago Cubs. That season was the pinnacle of a run of success for the storied franchise, but also the beginning of more than a century of futility (they would not win the World Series again until 2016). But behind that team—and the teams of 1906, 1907 and even 1910—was a trio of infielders immortalized in the popular imagination by an eight-line poem describing their ruthless double-play efficiency.

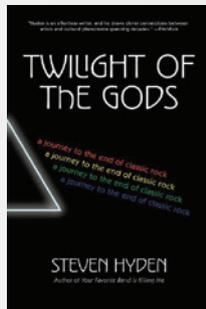
The poem "Baseball's Sad Lexicon," by Franklin Pierce Adams, begins with the lines "These are the saddest of possible words: Tinker to Evers to Chance." Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers and Frank Chance played shortstop, second base and first base respectively for the Cubs and formed the core of a team that won four pennants and two World Series titles in five years. Their defensive combination was devastating to opposing teams; and combined with the rest of the team's clutch hitting and ace pitching, they made the Cubs a force to be reckoned with in the first decade of the century.

Rapp uses the three players to

examine what baseball was like at the turn of the 20th century, what the sport had evolved from and where it was going. Organized baseball, he says, was first played prior to the Civil War, but the game we know today evolved as a “quasi-professional activity in urban social clubs and recreational leagues.” In part, Rapp contends, baseball was a reaction against the upright (and uptight) ways of the Victorians and their strict Calvinist roots. Baseball was more than a sport: It was a social phenomenon that grew in a way nothing else had done before it.

Rapp delves into brief biographies of Tinker, Evers and Chance to show that baseball was truly a national sport before it became the national pastime. The Cubs were one of the sport’s earliest dynasties, and the fact they were from Chicago, which Rapp contends was the epicenter of the baseball world, meant that the game was here to stay. The infield trio dissolved in 1912, which is where Rapp quite abruptly ends the book. But ultimately their run of success became a blueprint for and a harbinger of the success of the sport.

Dominic Lynch publishes *The Monthly Memo*, a Chicago-focused general interest website and newsletter.



Twilight of the Gods
A Journey to the End of Classic Rock
By Steven Hyden
Dey Street Books
320p \$25.99

For those about to rock

Halfway through *Twilight of the Gods*, I started to wonder if Steven Hyden had been rifling through my record collection. Well, not records but CDs; well, not CDs but playlists—you get the idea. The man is clearly attuned to the musical proclivities of the 40-something white male. High school obsession with classic rock radio, a format that included both the ridiculous (Styx, Journey) and the sublime (Rolling Stones, Kinks)? Check. Bob Dylan period, marked by a particular affection for “Visions of Johanna”? Check. Detour into jam bands (Phish, etc.) followed by an immersion in Wilco’s “dad rock”? Double check.

Hyden grew up listening to music in the 1980s and 1990s, a time when most of what is now called “classic rock” had already been recorded but was being hyped for a new generation of listeners through radio stations and magazines like *Rolling Stone*. For Hyden, classic rock represented a kind of gnostic text that could be deciphered by listening to albums like Pink Floyd’s “Dark Side of the Moon” on repeat and poring over the musings of Greil Marcus.

Hyden is a man of catholic tastes—perhaps too catholic. He

finds something redeeming about almost every band he has encountered, save the (expletive) Eagles and the “stubborn sleaziness” of Gene Simmons. Yes, he even has kind words for REO Speedwagon. Hyden says he is not a religious person, but he is fervently devoted to the music that he grew up with and the younger bands who are building on that legacy. (He gives special shout-outs to Courtney Barnett and Car Seat Headrest.) He has been to hundreds of music concerts, many simply ordinary, but all worthwhile for “that handful of transcendent nights” that live on in his memory. And he knows these moments are fleeting. With the death of musicians like David Bowie and AC/DC’s Malcolm Young, the end of the classic rock era is nigh.

“The exaggerated arc of rock stardom creates a framework for understanding our own lives,” Hyden writes. It sounds like a stretch, but he may not be too far off target. When parents start taking their kids to four-hour Bruce Springsteen concerts, you know they are hungry to be a part of something bigger than themselves. Why that something is an almost 70-year old man clad in leather and denim is the subject, perhaps, for another author.

Maurice Timothy Reidy, executive editor.
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Leonard Bernstein's liturgy—of and for the world

By Kevin McCabe

In July, Leonard Bernstein's rarely staged work "Mass: A Theater Piece for Singers, Dancers, and Players" was performed at Lincoln Center in New York as part of a celebration to mark the 100th birthday of the famous American composer. The work, commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for the opening of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1971, has from its beginning been controversial with both religious and nonreligious audiences.

Based on the movements of the Catholic Tridentine Mass, the piece incorporates a variety of musical styles, lyrics in English and Latin and a choir of "street protesters" to present a vision of faith and liturgy for the modern world. It was at first decried by many in the church, but by the year 2000 Pope John Paul II hosted a performance of the piece at the Vatican. The work was not created without Catholic consultation: Bernstein sought and received the advice of the antiwar activist Daniel Berrigan, S.J.,

as he was putting it together.

A New York Times review of the July performance by Zachary Woolfe was content to declare the piece a stale curiosity. A religious assessment of the piece, however, suggests that it retains power, for reasons Bernstein could and could not have expected.

To be sure, certain aspects of "Mass" reflect the time of its origin, from some of the sloganeering of the protest singers to the 1970s liberal Christian quest for a purer, more authentic religion behind (or below? above?) the ecclesiastical and sacramental accretions of the institutional church. Yet much of the piece is relevant today.

Most significantly, Bernstein uses liturgy to give voice to political unease. The cultural upheaval and political anxiety that marked the era in which Bernstein wrote "Mass" bear a striking resemblance to our own time. One stanza, written by Paul Simon, reads: "Half of the people are stoned/ And the other half are waiting for the next

election." This sentiment may have resonated with a certain portion of the audience. Bernstein's integration of protest and praise draws on a long tradition of protest against the divine that has seen bold iterations in recent decades. One thinks of the Act Up protesters who—much like Bernstein's street chorus—disrupted Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral during the early years of the AIDS crisis. Or the band Pussy Riot's performance in Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow in 2012 to protest the ties between the Orthodox Church and Vladimir Putin.

Bernstein helps us see that such actions are not so much as alien intrusion of protest into liturgy as the transformation of protest into liturgy—and liturgy into protest. "Mass" articulates the nexus, or perhaps dialectic, between protest and praise, and raises the question of whether and how the church today can embrace and give voice to the protests that are swirling outside of cathedral doors.



Leonard Bernstein's "Mass," recently revived in New York, was at first decried by many in the church, but was later performed at the Vatican.

After a devastating scene in which the celebrant strips off his robes and smashes the monstrance and chalice onto the floor, the piece ends with the full company in unison returning praise, played in the hopeful key of D major. In the *Times*, Woolfe interprets the peaceful, laudatory ending as “fundamentally, boringly conservative.” But this is to misinterpret Bernstein and the Catholic understanding of hope in the resurrection. Bernstein’s ending is not about the conservative triumph of order over chaos, the dispelling of doubt with a stifling certainty. The piece ends on a note of hope in the face of despair. It is a kind of new life that is only possible after the breaking of one’s heart and the dismantling of worldly idols.

The challenge of Bernstein’s “Mass” is whether the Christian liturgy can still welcome the protest of an uneasy world and still provide it with a message of hope today.

Kevin McCabe is a postdoctoral fellow at Seton Hall University. He teaches and writes on Christian systematic theology and ethics.

Plugging in to the Bible

I rarely read the Bible growing up. This all changed in my late 20s, however, thanks to my Protestant fiancé, whose experience with the word of God has been quite the opposite of mine: He can find any book in the Bible easily, knows quotes by heart and even has a biblical name (Enoch).

Initially, reading Scripture together was fun. Once the excitement wore off, however, I ventured into the world of Bible apps. But as useful as these features were, I didn’t like the classical music that accompanied the text and found the voice-overs to be monotonous.

Two apps broke through the monotony. One is the Streetlights Bible app, which includes an audio Bible that features poets, pastors, parents and even children reading Scripture set over a hip-hop score. It was created by Esteban Shedd, Loren La Luz and Aaron Lopez, who believe that everyone should be allowed to engage with the word.

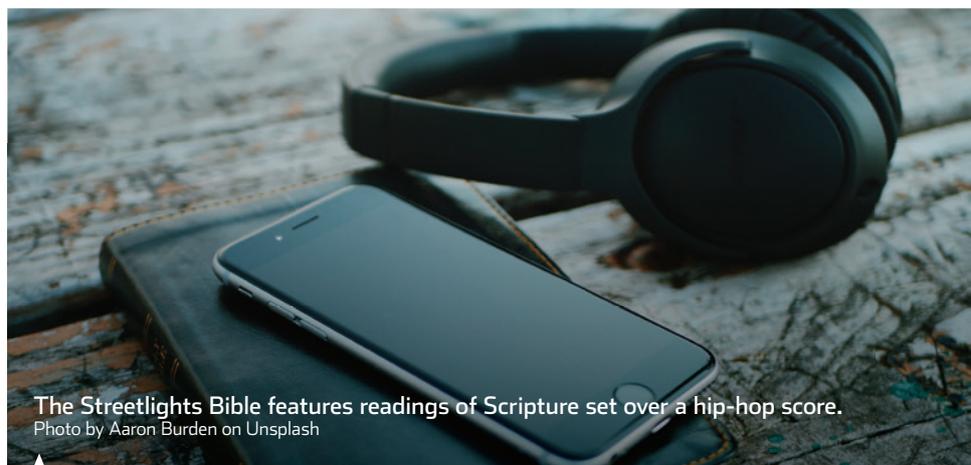
The second is the Our Bible app, which was created by Crystal Cheatham. Through daily devotionals, podcasts, books and other media, the Our Bible team’s mission is “to untangle the binds that Christian

colonizers have spread across the globe.” The app highlights women, L.G.B.T. people and people of color and includes daily devotionals focused on themes like how to grow in faith and the church and the #Me-Too movement.

Over the summer, I followed “The Power of Praise” devotional, a 10-day series led by the Rev. Jes Kast. On day three, the devotional states: “The courage to come out to family as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer is always a brave decision.... The good news is that Jesus models for us a new way of being family with each other.” This devotional, and others in the app, promotes a Christianity that is inclusive of many marginalized groups.

These apps have helped me to continue to incorporate the Bible into my faith life and to grow as a Catholic. I probably wouldn’t be reading the Bible as regularly or as attentively without the help of Streetlights Bible and Our Bible. And, most important, they have reminded me of the different people and experiences that make up the church.

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



The Streetlights Bible features readings of Scripture set over a hip-hop score.
Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Malone S.J." in a cursive script.

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Thomas and Mary Alice Roberts

In today's changing, challenging and frequently startling world, *America's* thought-provoking articles and podcasts support and guide our continuing faith journey for ourselves and our family. Our pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Father Jim Martin, S.J., was truly life-altering. The staff at *America* is an inspiring and dedicated group. We are privileged and proud to support the mission. 🍷🍷

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Rev. Joseph T. Donnelly

Most media outlets are identified by left, right, progressive, conservative, whatever. *America* defies all that, while giving you a real – especially if you’re a person of faith – sense of how my faith looks at these different things. I’ve been a priest for almost 44 years, and I feel like I’ve invested a little life’s blood in the church and its mission and *America* reaches so many different people, especially with the multiple platforms that they’re using now. I want that to go on. 🍷🍷

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Speaking out for inclusion comes with some unpleasant responses, but it makes me proud to be a Catholic when I read your articles on our responsibility to love those on the margins. Here's hoping you all continue to raise your voices in print and other media for another century and more, and know you are greatly appreciated and cheered. ●● Dia Norris

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America magazine energizes our faith and commitment to Ignatian spirituality. It hones those critical thinking skills that have molded our personal and professional lives as leaders for the benefit of others. 🍷🍷

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 Mrs. Rosemarie DeVivo • 2015 Connecticut
 Mr. and Mrs. Angas & Fred Dick • 2015 New York
 Ms. Karen Diefenbach • 2018 California
 Ms. Anna M. DiGenio • 1989 Massachusetts
 Mr. Gerald Digre • 2018 Florida
 Ms. Deborah Dirmeyer • 2018 Tennessee
 Ms. Deborah Divorl • 2017 New York
 Ms. Francena M. Dodd • 2018 Washington
 Mr. and Mrs. David Dodson • 2014 Illinois
 Mr. Gerald P. Doherty • 2015 New York
 Ms. Mary Domenichini • 2014 California
 Ms. Lenore J. Domers • 2007 Wisconsin
 Mr. Charles Donahue, Jr. • 2016 Massachusetts
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Doney • 1991 New York
 Ms. Maryann Donnelly • 2014 New York
 Mr. Leo Donoghue • 2018 Massachusetts
 Ms. Margaret Anne Donohue • 1996 New York
 Ms. Doreen A. Donohue • 2015 Florida
 Mr. Douglas Donohue • 2018 New York
 Rev. Cyril F. Doody • 2014 New York
 Ms. Mary Doody • 2015 Pennsylvania



Mr. Peter C. Dooley • 2018 New York
 Ms. Anna Dos Ramos • 2015 California
 Ms. Beth Dotson Brown • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Cecilia Dougherty • 2018 New Jersey
 Mr. Arthur T. Downey • 2005 Maryland
 Ms. Clara M. Doyle • 2001 Virginia
 Mr. Michael Doyle • 2009 Virginia
 Mrs. Monica Doyle • 2015 New York
 Mr. James L. Doyle • 2017 South Carolina
 Mr. Alexander G. Draffan, Jr. • 2017 California
 Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Droste • 2000 Connecticut
 Catherine S. du Breuil & Joseph Merola • 2007 ... Va.
 Mr. Joseph A. Dubanowich • 2006 ... North Carolina
 Mr. Jose Dueno, S.J. • 2018 New York
 Ms. Vicki Duesterhoeft • 2018 Oregon
 Mr. Terrence J. Dugan and Mrs. Diane C. Dugan • 2014 California
 Dr. and Mrs. John A. Duggan • 1989 .. Massachusetts
 Mr. William Duggan, Jr. • 2018 Michigan
 Ms. Caroline M. Dulle • 2013 Texas
 Mr. Terrence Dumas • 2012 Michigan
 Richard Dunks • 2018 N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Dunleavy • 2006 Pa.
 Msgr. William A. Dunn • 2006 Ohio
 Ms. Louise Dunn • 2018 Connecticut
 Mr. Michael Dunn • 2018 Wisconsin
 Mr. John R. Dunne • 2004 New York
 Ms. Carol Dunphy • 2018 New Jersey
 Mrs. Robert C. Durbin • 1995 Indiana
 Ms. Mary C. Durkin • 2012 Ohio
 Mr. Paul V. Dwyer • 2005 Florida
 Dr. Elizabeth S. Dybell, Ph.D. • 2014 Texas
 Ms. Eleanor G. Dyett • 2016 Vermont
 Charles and Sonja Earthman Novo • 2003 Texas
 Mr. Ryan Ecken • 2018 Kentucky
 Mr. Robert Egan • 2018 Nevada
 Mr. Dennis Ehling • 2018 California
 Ms. Mary F. Ehlinger • 2018 Ohio
 Ms. Rita Ehrenberg • 2014 Illinois
 Mr. William C. Ehrhardt • 1988 New Jersey
 Mr. Stephen V. Eimers • 2018 California
 Sr. Mary Del Rey Ekler • 2010 Colorado
 Ms. Martha Ellert • 2018 Illinois
 Ms. Susan Elliott • 2017 Alaska
 Mr. Cielito O. Elliott • 2018 Nevada
 Mr. T.J. Elliott • 2018 New Jersey

Dr. Edward A. Ellis • 1991 Florida
 Mr. Joseph G. Ennis • 2018 New York
 Mr. John J. Entwistle • 1998 New York
 Jim Eraci • 2018 N/A
 Ms. Sharon Erkman • 2016 New Jersey
 Col. Charles R. Erlinger • 2014 Texas
 Mr. and Mrs. William C. Ertmer • 2018 Colorado
 Mr. and Mrs. Rod Evans • 2018 California
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward P. Evert, Jr. • 2017 Illinois
 Mr. Dan Faas • 2017 New York
 Ms. Eileen Faas • 2018 Michigan
 Ms. Kelly S. Fairweather • 2012 New York
 Mr. Nicholas Falco • 1989 New York
 Ms. Helen Falcone • 2018 Connecticut
 Mr. Yvette Fallandy • 2018 California
 Ms. Patricia Fallon • 1983 Maryland
 Ms. Marilyn Falvey • 2017 New York
 Fr. Robert Fambrini, S.J. • 2014 California
 Ms. Nancy Fava • 2017 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. James P. Feloney • 2018 California
 Ms. Pulseira Feminina • 2018 Brazil
 Rev. Robert J. Fenzl • 2000 Wisconsin
 Deacon Dismas Fernandez • 2014 Illinois
 Dr. and Mrs. Luis Fernandez-Rocha • 2014 ... Florida
 Ms. Ellen Ferrone • 2013 North Carolina
 Mr. James F. Fetscher • 2018 Florida
 Dr. Joseph F. Fiala • 1990 Ohio
 Mr. David Fikstad • 2018 Oregon
 Ms. Janet Fimbres • 2018 Oregon
 Ms. Barbara Fink • 2006 Ohio
 Mr. Thomas B. Finn • 2015 New Jersey
 Ms. Maureen Finnegan • 2018 New Jersey
 Ms. Mary Finnerty • 2018 Illinois
 Mr. Kevin J. Fischer and Ms. Frances A. Mooney • 2018 Virginia
 Ms. Ellen Fishman • 2015 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Edmund J. FitzGerald • 1997 S.C.
 Dr. Paul F. Fitzgerald, M.D. • 2006 Virginia
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas G. Fitzgerald, Sr. • 2012 Md.
 Mr. Tom P. Fitzgerald • 2018 Minnesota
 Sr. Agatha Fitzgerald • 2018 Ohio
 Ms. Mary Ann Fitzgibbon • 2012 New York
 Ms. Kathryn Fitzsimmons • 2013 Maryland
 Mr. Patrick F. Flaherty • 2005 Illinois
 Ms. Mary Sue Flanagan • 2015 D.C.
 Sr. Mary P. Flattery • 2015 Connecticut

Gef Flimlin • 2018 New Jersey
 Miss Barbara Floodman • 2015 Missouri
 Mr. Sean Flynn • 2015 New Jersey
 Mr. Louis J. Fohn • 2016 Texas
 Mr. Thomas P. Folan, Jr. • 2014 Massachusetts
 Mr. Kevin Foley • 2018 Ontario
 Ms. Margaret E. Folger • 2018 Indiana
 Ms. Nancy Fontenot • 2007 Louisiana
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. & Joan M. Formisano • 2016
 New York
 Dr. Eve Forrest • 2016 California
 Mr. and Mrs. John Forslund • 2014 Georgia
 Mr. Nathanael L. Foshage • 2018 Colorado
 Ms. Janice L. Fournier • 2016 Connecticut
 Fr. Thomas Fowler • 2015 New Brunswick
 Jeanne Foy • 2017 Alaska
 Mr. Frank A. France • 2017 Louisiana
 Michelle Francel-Donnay • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Ronald G. Franz and Barbara A. Lefebvre • 2016 California
 Mr. Joseph P. Fredrick & Mrs. Barbara B. Fredrick • 2010 California
 Ms. Patricia Freeburg • 2018 Washington
 Mr. Nicholas Frega • 2018 N/A
 Dr. and Mrs. R. Terrell Frey • 2004 Ohio
 Ms. Helga Frick • 2018 New York
 Mr. Gavin Frost • 2018 Australia
 Mr. and Mrs. Dante P. Fuligni • 2000 Pa.
 Ms. Mary Furlong • 2014 New York
 Dr. and Mrs. Dominick Gadaleta • 2016 New York
 Mr. Guy Gagne • 2017 New York
 Rev. James L. Gahan • 2015 Missouri
 Mr. Edward J. Gallagher, III • 2014 Iowa
 Andrew and Marie Galligan • 2003 California
 Ms. Carly A. Gannon • 2017 New York
 Dr. and Mrs. Efrain Garcia • 1997 Texas
 Rev. David H. Garcia • 2001 Texas
 Ms. Maria Garcia • 2018 California
 R. Garcia Vazquez • 2017 New Jersey
 Ms. Natalie Garda • 2018 Ohio
 Mr. John A. Garisto • 2017 Massachusetts
 Msgr. Paul V. Garrity • 2017 Massachusetts
 Ms. Kathleen T. Garry • 2003 New York
 Rev. James W. Garvey • 1990 Pennsylvania
 Mrs. Dorothy E. Garvin • 2010 New York
 Ms. Claire Gaudiani • 2017 New York
 Mr. Ernest Gauthier • 2018 Missouri
 Rev. J. Duane Gavitt • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Elizabeth Gavula • 2001 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Carey Geghan • 2017 Florida
 Mr. Eric Geiser & Mrs. Leslie Geiser • 2015 Mich.
 Christopher Gelke • 2018 N/A
 Mr. Paul Gerosky • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Emad Ghith • 2018 South Carolina
 Dr. Lillian Gibbons • 2016 Maryland
 Deacon and Mrs. Paul A. Gifford • 1994 Maryland
 Mr. Phill Giggey, Sr. • 2018 Virginia
 Rev. Michael E. Giglio • 1993 Florida
 Ms. Dorothy Gillan • 2009 California
 Mr. William Gilles • 2017 Connecticut
 Mr. and Mrs. John T. Gillespie • 2000 Pa.
 Mr. George B. Gilmore • 2009 Alabama

Ms. Rachel Girard • 2015 Maine
Mr. Edward Girres • 2010 Iowa
Ms. Marion Gittings • 2018 North Carolina
Mr. and Ms. James Gleason • 2015 New York
Ms. Mary C. Gleason-Brown • 2018 .. Massachusetts
Dr. and Mrs. Michael Gliatto, M.D. • 2010 Pa.
Ms. Nina G. Glorioso • 2008 Louisiana
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Ms. Paula Godar • 2018 Missouri
Ms. Nathalie Godinot • 2016 Indiana
Most Rev. Raymond E. Goedert • 1988 Illinois
Mr. Robert Golia • 2018 New York
Mr. John Goltz • 2013 Maryland
Mr. George G. Gonzalez • 2018 Ohio
Ms. Lauren Gonzalez • 2018 Connecticut
Mr. Josph Goode • 2018 New Jersey
Mr. Michael R. Goonan • 2003 New York
Mr. Hubert Gordon • 2003 Pennsylvania
Ms. Nancy Gordon • 2014 New Jersey
Rev. Francis P. Gorman • 2004 New York
Bob Gorman • 2018 Ohio
Rev. David H. Gosnell • 2014 Indiana
Mrs. Frances S. Grace • 1999 Wisconsin
Mr. Edmund Grace • 2018 Virginia
Mr. Todd A. Graff • 2009 Minnesota
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Graham • 1983 Kentucky
Ms. Deborah S. Grant • 2018 South Carolina
Mr. Richard Grant • 2018 New York
Rev. Susan Grant Rosen • 2017 Massachusetts
Ms. Marita Green • 2013 Pennsylvania
Patricia R. Green • 2015 Tennessee
Ms. Diane D. Greenberg • 2018 New York
Mr. and Mrs. E. James Greiner • 2012 New York
Mr. and Mrs. Gary E. Greiner • 2018 Ohio
Mr. Albert Grendler • 2017 Iowa
Mr. John Griesbach • 2014 California
Ms. Laura Griffel Ashbaugh • 2018 Illinois
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Ms. Elizabeth Griffith • 2018 Maryland
Mr. Thomas Griffith • 2018 Nebraska
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Grilli • 2017 New Jersey
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Mr. Charles J. Groppe • 2006 New York
Rev. Robert D. Grosch • 2008 Montana
Ms. Peggy Grossman • 2015 Illinois
Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Grosso • 2016 Indiana
Mr. and Mrs. Jon Groulx • 2018 Michigan
Rev. Wayne Gubbels • 2007 Iowa
Mr. Thomas Guilfoi • 2003 Washington
Mr. Darnell R. Guillory • 2018 Louisiana
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Mr. and Mrs. Francis S. Guistolise • 2012 Illinois
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Rev. James A. Habelwitz • 2007 Wisconsin
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Jorge and Marcia Hadad • 2018 Illinois
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Mr. Joe Hall • 2018 Nebraska
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Halpin • 1990 Mass.
Mr. and Mrs. Eric Halpin • 2018 New Jersey
Ms. Melanie J. Halvorson • 2009 Illinois
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ham • 2018 New York
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph V. Hamilton, Jr. • 1995 N.Y.
Ms. Doris Hand • 2010 California
Ms. Kathryn A. Hand • 2016 New Jersey
Mr. and Mrs. and Mrs. Robert J. Handley • 2004
..... Michigan
Rev. Msgr. Sharron Hanisch • 2018 Oklahoma
Ms. Janet Hannon • 2012 New York
Ms. Adele Hanrahan • 2018 Illinois
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Mr. John Hansen • 2018 Delaware
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen U. Harders • 1989 Maryland
Mr. John J. Hardiman • 2007 New York
Mr. and Mrs. William A. Harkins • 2006 New Jersey
Mr. Ryan Harnedy • 2018 Massachusetts
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence and Susan Harr • 2015 Neb.
Mrs. Doris Z. Harrington • 1985 Connecticut
Mr. Michael A. Harrington • 2014 Georgia
Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Harrington • 2015 Mass.
Ms. Kathleen Harrington • 2018 Massachusetts
Rev. Msgr. Robert M. Harris • 2005 New York
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2018 Pennsylvania
Mr. and Mrs. Norton Hatlie • 2016 Iowa
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N. J. Havel and P. N. Havel • 2018 California
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Ms. Grace E. Heising • 2016 Florida
Ms. Joann Held • 1989 New Jersey
R. M. and P. T. Helmer • 2017 New Jersey
Dr. N. Pierre Helou • 2014 New York
Mr. Brian Hennessey • 2018 Illinois
Mr. Charles G. Hennessy • 2016 Virginia
Ms. Kerry Henning • 2018 Illinois
Mr. Patrick Heslin • 2016 Florida
Rev. Roger J. Hessian • 1989 Minnesota
Ms. Marguerite Hessian-Gatz • 2017 Minnesota
Mr. and Mrs. James R. Hickey • 2018 Ohio
Mr. Richard J. Higgins • 1984 D.C.
Rev. Thomas M. Higgins • 2003 Pennsylvania
Mr. and Mrs. William Higgins • 2016 Connecticut
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Mr. Charles H. Hines • 2018 Massachusetts
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Mr. John Hoffmann • 2018 Missouri
Ms. Sally Hogan • 2018 Indiana
Rev. David Holloway • 2013 Missouri
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Mr. Ronald J. Hooker • 2018 Ohio
Mr. Robert Horan • 2018 Virginia
Mr. George M. Horey • 2018 Virginia
Ms. Rebecca Horton • 2018 Tennessee
Ms. Gisele Hoskinson • 2018 Alberta
Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Hothorn • 2012 Florida
F. J. Houghton • 2008 New Jersey
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Houlihan • 2012 Pa.
Deacon Joseph F. Houser • 2012 Pennsylvania
Ms. Deanna Howes • 2016 District of Columbia
Mr. George F. Howlett, Jr. • 2006 Wisconsin
Mr. Timothy Hoye • 2017 New Jersey
Rev. Daniel R. Huber • 2002 Colorado
Mr. Alec Hufford • 2017 New York
Ms. Kelly Hughes • 2018 Illinois
Mr. Scott Huizenga • 2016 Michigan
Mr. Samuel Hull • 2015 Texas
Ms. Ann D. Hungerman • 2006 Michigan
Dr. Martha Hunt • 2014 California
Ms. Emilee Hunter-Maguire • 2018 Nebraska
Mr. Denny Hunthausen • 2017 Washington
Mr. James Huse • 2018 Virginia
Leroy J. and Virginia L. Hushak • 2002 Ohio
Mr. Peter J. F. Hussey • 2002 Connecticut
Mr. Michael Hutchins • 2018 Illinois
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Iannacone • 2018 Pa.
Ms. Deborah Igarashi • 2017 Texas
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas V. Inglesby, M.D. • 2018 ... N. J.
Mr. Robert L. Inglis, Jr. • 2015 Illinois
Ms. Donna Ioppolo • 2018 Illinois
Mr. Frank P. Iovine • 1995 New York
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Irving • 2018 Pa.
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Iwobi • 2016 New York
Ms. Katharine Jackson • 2017 Kansas
Ms. Fay R. Jackson • 2018 Texas
Rev. Joseph A. Jacobi • 1993 Oklahoma
Mr. and Mrs. John T. Jacoby • 2018 New Jersey
Mr. Louis Janelle • 2017 Ohio
Dr. and Mrs. James L. Januzzi • 1990 New Jersey
Ms. Joan Jarosek • 2015 Texas
Miss Christine A. Jarvis • 2007 California
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Jobin • 2016 Illinois
Mr. Gerald W. Johnson • 2002 Nebraska
Ms. Jennifer Johnson • 2016 Michigan
Ms. Rachel Johnson • 2018 California
Enoch Johnson • 2018 New York
Mr. Robert Jones • 2015 Arkansas
Dr. Janice M. Jordan • 2016 North Carolina
Mr. Michael Jordan • 2018 Texas
Mr. Mitchell Horowitz and Ms. Milagros Jorge •
2018 Virginia
Fr. Methanath J. Joseph • 2018 Texas
Mr. Peter P. Kalac • 2003 New Jersey
Ms. Ruby J. Kammerer • 2014 Montana
Ms. Mary Beth Kamp • 2008 Michigan
Dr. Francis J. Kane, Jr. • 2007 Georgia
Mr. Dennis Kane • 2015 New Mexico
Mr. Donald Kaperick • 2010 Washington
Ms. Tari L. Karbowski • 2017 New York

Dr. Philip Karst • 2015 Missouri
 Mr. James Keane • 2017 New York
 Mr. & Mrs. C. Philip & Julia Kearney • 2014 Mich.
 Ms. Mary R. Keeling • 1996 Illinois
 Mr. John Kehoe • 2015 Texas
 Mr. John Keiser • 2017 Maryland
 Mr. John D. Kelleher & Ms. Viki A. Fowler • 2005
 Massachusetts
 Mr. and Mrs. Terry F. Keller • 1985 Connecticut
 Rev. Edward J. Kelly • 2012 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Kelly • 2016 New Jersey
 Ms. Kathryn Kelly • 2017 District of Columbia
 Ms. Claire M. Kelly and Ms. MaryAnne MacDonnell •
 2018 Florida
 Ms. Regina Kelly • 2018 New York
 Mr. Michael Kelly • 2018 Illinois
 Ms. Rachel Kelly • 2018 Illinois
 Ms. Cecile Kelly • 2018 District of Columbia
 Ms. Christine H. Kemp • 2002 New York

Ms. Elizabeth Knowles • 2016 South Carolina
 Mr. Joseph Kobos • 2013 Texas
 Deacon and Mrs. Paul Konold • 2016 Virginia
 Mr. Stanley P. Kopacz • 1987 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. John W. Kopff • 2016 Missouri
 Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Korfmacher • 2018 N.J.
 Mr. and Mrs. Brad and Jean Korte • 2015 Illinois
 Ms. Mary Kosick • 2018 Georgia
 Mr. Jeff Kosulics • 2018 New Jersey
 Mr. Robert Kowalsky • 2018 Wisconsin
 Mr. and Mrs. William V. Krause • 1988 Florida
 Ms. Mary J. Kreidler • 2018 Kentucky
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard & Debbie Krohn • 2018 Ga.
 Mr. Joseph C. Kuestersteffen • 2015 Kansas
 Rev. Msgr. Raymond J. Kupke • 1989 New Jersey
 Dr. A. Peter Kurtz • 2003 Massachusetts
 Mr. Scott Kurz • 2018 New York
 Mr. Michael R. Kuse • 2016 Illinois
 Mrs. Marie J. Kushner • 2010 Ohio

Mr. Jeffrey T. Leitch • 2016 Ohio
 Ms. Mary T. Lemanek • 2017 Michigan
 Mr. and Mrs. Russell P. Lemker • 2007 Minnesota
 Ms. Beth Lenahan • 2018 New York
 Ms. Anne Marie Leofanti • 2015 Illinois
 Ms. Maureen Leventhal • 2018 D.C.
 Ms. Jeannine T. Levesque • 2014 New Hampshire
 Ms. Georgette Levesque • 2017 New York
 Ms. Kristin A. Lewandowski • 2012 .. Massachusetts
 Ms. Maire Liberace • 2018 New York
 Ms. Mary Limeburner • 2018 Quebec
 Ms. Judith A. Lindbom • 1999 Wisconsin
 Ms. Judith A. Linden • 2015 New York
 Ms. Kathryn Lisansky • 2016 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Sandra R. Lizza • 2018 New Jersey
 Mariana Llanso • 2017 Florida
 Ms. Patricia Lo • 2018 Ontario
 Ms. Mary P. Loftus • 2012 California
 Mr. Bob Loftus & Mrs. Mary Jo Loftus • 2014... Minn.



Diana Perez

I want to congratulate *America* for the excellent issue on Latinos in the U.S. Catholic Church from this past April. It was the first time I could relate to a magazine that was intelligent, articulate and knowledgeable about the Latino community. No magazine that I can recall has ever done that... This is trailblazing work! 🍷🍷

Ms. Elizabeth C. Kennedy • 2017 Massachusetts
 Ms. Beth Kennedy • 2018 North Carolina
 Mr. John J. Kenny • 2003 Virginia
 Mr. Peter C. Kenny • 2010 Massachusetts
 Ms. Janet M. Keogan • 2012 New York
 Ms. Pamela Keogh • 2015 New York
 Ms. Kristine Keough • 2018 N/A
 Mr. Kenn Kern • 2015 New York
 Ms. Ellen L. Kiel • 2018 Maryland
 Mr. John Kiely • 2008 Michigan
 Rev. Michael F. Kiernan • 2018 California
 Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Kilduff • 2012 Virginia
 Rev. John C. Killeen • 2012 New Jersey
 Dr. David P. Killen and Mrs. Patricia O. Killen • 2007
 Washington
 Mr. Stephen Kimbell • 2018 Florida
 P. M. King and M. S. King • 2018 Delaware
 Mr. Jeffrey Kinnier • 2018 Georgia
 Mr. and Mrs. John and Mary Klaus • 2015 Illinois
 Mr. and Mrs. John J. Klein • 2017 Arizona
 Mr. and Mrs. Steven F. Klein • 2018 Wisconsin
 Rev. Marvin J. Klemmer • 2001 North Dakota
 Ms. Mary E. Klink • 1989 Wisconsin
 Mr. Denny Klosterman • 2015 Missouri
 Mrs. Thomas S. Knight, Jr. • 1990 Connecticut
 Mrs. James C. Knop • 2000 Missouri

Mr. Andes Kwok • 2018 Ontario, Canada
 Mr. Matthew Kyrish • 2018 N/A
 Rev. Arthur J. La Baff • 2014 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. La Centra • 2016 Florida
 Dr. and Mrs. Mariano F. La Via • 2000 S.C.
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard R. LaBelle • 2016 Wash.
 Shayne Labudda • 2018 Wisconsin
 Fr. Stephen J. LaCanne • 1997 Minnesota
 Ms. Nuria Lacklen • 2017 Washington
 Hon. John J. LaFalce • 2018 New York
 Ms. Lois Lafayette • 2018 Ohio
 Mr. Michael Lally • 2017 Connecticut
 Mr. and Mrs. William H. Lambert, Jr. • 2018 Ohio
 Mr. Loyd Lamois • 2017 Virginia
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Landfield • 2017 Maryland
 Ms. Joan Landon • 2017 Florida
 Mr. and Mrs. John J. Lane • 2015 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Gerald F. Lange • 2010 .. South Dakota
 Mr. Terence Langley • 2017 Wisconsin
 Sr. Michelle Langlois • 2018 Alberta
 Ms. Olga Bensí Latessa • 2015 New York
 Ms. Florence Laureira • 2012 Florida
 Ms. Dolores R. Leckey • 2006 Virginia
 Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Lederer • 2018 Illinois
 Ms. Joan Lee • 2018 Minnesota
 Mr. Richard Leidl • 2016 Maryland

Ms. Maria Lonzak • 2017 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Ronald V. Long • 2010 Colorado
 Mr. Laurence Long • 2018 Arizona
 Mr. John D. Long-Garcia • 2018 Arizona
 Ms. Estela Lopez • 2015 California
 Ms. Judith Lorrig • 2017 Minnesota
 Mr. and Mrs. Francis & Mary Lostumbo • 2013 .. Md.
 Ms. Jane Loughlin • 2017 New York
 Mrs. Joanne Love • 2014 Georgia
 Mr. and Mrs. George D. Low • 2018 Connecticut
 Mr. and Mrs. Atherton C. Lowry • 2015 Pa.
 Mr. Guillermo Loyola • 2017 California
 Kenneth Ludescher • 2018 Minnesota
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Lukesh • 2018 S.C.
 Dr. Daniel T.W. Lum, M.D. and Ms. Mary K. Deeley •
 2016 Illinois
 Mr. Rafael Luna • 2018 New York
 Mr. Thomas R. Lundstrom • 2012 Colorado
 Mr. Peter Lupario • 2014 New Hampshire
 Mr. Philip J. Lyman • 2013 New York
 Mary Lynch • 2018 Iowa
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Lyons • 1990 Mass.
 Mr. Tom Lyons • 2018 New York
 Ms. Laura Lyons Karrh • 2018 South Carolina
 Yvonne Mac Cormack • 2018 Massachusetts
 Ms. Claudia Macaluso • 2018 Michigan

Sr. Claire Macdonald • 2004 New York
 Rev. Paul V. MacDonald • 2006 Massachusetts
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph and Ellen A. Macek • 2003 Md.
 Mr. Paul F. Mackey • 1993 Nevada
 Mr. and Mrs. John Madden, Jr. • 1990 Illinois
 Mr. Edward Madden • 1993 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Samir Madden • 2018 Arizona
 Mr. William A. Maddigan • 1997 California
 Ms. Sandra Madigan • 2017 Colorado
 Mr. and Mrs. James V. Maher • 1993 Pennsylvania
 Sister Walter Maher • 2016 Texas
 Mr. Cornelius C. Maher • 2018 Massachusetts
 Mr. Ed Mahoney • 2018 Florida
 Anne Mahoney • 2018 N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Malarkey • 2006 Maryland
 Ms. Margaret Mallin • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Deacon Mallinger & Ms. Mallinger • 2015...Texas
 Sr. Franceline Malone • 2017 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Helen Manaras • 1990 Montana
 Mary Ellen Mandry • 2018 New York
 Ms. Regina Maney • 2018 S.C.
 Mr. Nicholas Mangieri • 2018 New Jersey
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mangino • 2018 New Jersey
 Rev. Martin K. Mannion • 1999 Missouri
 Ms. Janaan Manternach • 2013 Iowa
 Caroline D. Marcotte • 2018 Maryland
 Ms. Katherine Maria • 2017 New York
 Ms. Jeanette Marin • 2018 Maryland
 Mr. Michael Marino • 2012 Connecticut
 Rev. Joseph Markalonis, TOR • 2012 ... Pennsylvania
 Mr. James J. Marshall • 2003 Rhode Island
 Mr. and Mrs. William Marston • 2016 Maine
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 Mr. Bernard T. Martin • 2018 Texas
 Ms. Jacqueline Martin • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Lisa Martinson • 2018 Washington
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald & Margaret Martone • 2015...Ohio
 Ms. Margaret E. Maruschak • 2015 New York
 Ms. Bernardine Matelis • 2017 Maryland
 Mr. and Mrs. Arthur W. Maurer • 2010 New York
 Mr. Paul Max • 2018 Colorado
 Ms. M. Catherine Mayleben • 2017 ... North Carolina
 Mr. Robert McAdams, Jr. • 2003 California
 Mr. and Mrs. John F. McCabe, Jr. • 2017 Maryland
 Rev. Msgr. William J. McCaffrey • 2002 R.I.
 Mr. John P. McCann, Jr. • 2003 Pennsylvania
 Mr. E Michael McCann • 2010 Wisconsin
 Mr. Kevin W. McCanna • 2017 Illinois
 Mr. Brian McCarthy • 2000 California
 Fr. Tom McCarthy, OSA • 2015 Illinois
 Ms. Mary E. McCarthy • 2018 New Jersey
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 Rev. James J. McConnell • 2003 New York
 Mr. James McConnell • 2018 Connecticut
 Rev. Edward T. McCorry • 2004 New York
 Mr. Robert N. McDonald • 1987 Maryland
 Mr. and Mrs. William McDonald • 2015 Illinois
 Ms. Anne McDonald • 2017 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Thomas McDonnell • 2018 Ireland
 Dr. Katie McDonough • 2012 Nevada
 Rev. James McDonough • 2013 Texas
 Mr. Robert McDonough • 2014 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Thomas J. McElligott • 2012 Illinois
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 Mary Ellen F. McEvily • 2014 New York
 Mr. Arthur McFadden • 2018 N/A
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 Ms. Mary McGlone • 2018 Oregon
 Mr. John McGlynn • 2014 Florida
 Mr. John J. McGovern • 2009 New York
 Rev. Seamus McGowan • 2014 Texas
 Sr. Lorraine McGrew • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Madeleine Z. McGuinness • 2018 N.C.
 Ms. Eileen G. McHugh • 2004 Kentucky
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard McIvor • 2018 ... Pennsylvania
 The Hon. J. Kevin McKay • 1977 New York
 Mrs. Catherine A. McKeen • 1982 New York
 Bill and Debbie McKenna • 2013 Missouri
 Mrs. Mary A. McKenna • 2014 Pennsylvania
 Rev. Francis P. McKenna • 2014 Georgia
 Ms. Ashley McKinless • 2017 New York
 Ms. Ester L. McKnight • 2018 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard McLane • 1996 Washington
 Ms. Mary J. McLaughlin • 2005 Pennsylvania
 Mr. William McLaughlin • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Rev. James R. McLellan • 2012 Massachusetts
 Mr. Randall D. McMahon • 2002 California
 Ms. Frannie McMahan • 2018 Oregon
 Ms. Jane McNabb • 2018 Georgia
 Ms. Ann McNally • 2017 Pennsylvania
 Mr. John D. McNamee • 2014 Nevada
 Mr. Donald L. McNeil • 2006 Wisconsin
 Rev. William J. McNulty • 2014 Illinois
 Ms. Michael J. McNulty • 2016 Illinois
 Mr. Matthew McPartland • 2016 Florida
 Mr. David McQuillan • 2018 Connecticut
 Ms. Lynne McSheehy • 2018 Massachusetts
 Mr. Allan McWilliams • 2018 Arizona
 Lorin Or Rosemary Meade • 2017 Illinois
 Mr. and Mrs. Philip Medeiros • 2017 Connecticut
 Ms. Christine Meece • 2018 Kentucky
 Rev. Joseph J. Meehan • 2015 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Stuart Meisenzahl • 2017 Georgia
 Mr. Richard F. Melka • 2016 Pennsylvania
 Margaret Mellon • 2014 District of Columbia
 Mrs. Barbara J. Menard • 2010 California
 Ms. Veronica Mendez • 2018 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mendonca • 2015 Mass.
 Ms. Judith A. Menke • 2018 Minnesota
 Ms. Samantha Mercanti-Anthony • 2018 New Jersey
 Mr. Michael C. Merriam • 2018 Texas
 Ms. Nancy Merrill • 2017 California
 Carlos Mesquita • 2018 Connecticut
 Rev. William R. Metzler • 2009 Connecticut
 Mr. Harry J. Meyer • 2012 Ohio
 John Michel • 2016 Ohio
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald N. Mickells • 2003 Mass.
 Rev. Msgr. Joseph J. Milani • 1987 California
 Mrs. Elizabeth E. Miller • 2000 Massachusetts
 Mrs. Helen Miller • 2014 New Jersey
 Ms. Barbara A. Miller • 2015 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Karl Miller • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Paul Miller • 2018 Minnesota
 Rev. Joseph M. Mills • 1988 Kentucky
 Mr. Mark Mills • 2017 Washington
 Ms. Marilou Mills • 2018 California
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Millus • 2012 S.C.
 Ms. Catherine Miner • 2015 Florida
 Richard F. Minor • 2018 Georgia
 Mr. Robert J. Mirabile • 1994 New York
 Ms. Cathy Mirecki • 2015 Massachusetts
 Deacon Michael Missaggia • 1992 New Jersey
 Dr. James Mitchell • 2017 New York
 Mr. Stanley Mizgala • 2013 Quebec
 Mr. Michael J. Mocek • 2012 Texas
 Mr. Robert N. Mockler and Mrs. Mary Pat Mockler • 2004 Nebraska
 Mrs. Judith E. Molseed • 2012 Virginia
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Monaghan • 2013 N.J.
 Mr. Frank Monahan • 2018 Maryland
 Ms. Jessica Monde • 2018 N/A
 Ms. Mary J. Mondello • 2004 Ohio
 Ms. Mary J. Mongan • 2012 Maryland
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter F. Moore • 2004 Florida
 Mr. John J. Moore • 2014 Connecticut
 Ms. Carole Morales • 2018 California
 Ms. Dorothy Moran • 2018 New York
 Mr. Francis J. Moran • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Matthew Morano • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Phillip and Shirley Morley • 2006 Illinois
 Mr. Henry Morones • 2018 California
 Mr. Daniel Morris • 2018 Massachusetts
 Mr. Jacob A. Mosbrucker • 2016 Oregon
 Mr. John Mosser • 2015 Ohio
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A Word and a Voice

Readings: Is 35:4-7, Ps 146, Jas 2:1-5, Mk 7:31-37

Mark appreciates a good symbol. The narratives he presents often reveal the deeper elements of Jesus' mission. In this Sunday's Gospel reading, for example, Mark invites us to consider how Jesus restores the perception and voice of many.

After his conflict with the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus headed north from the traditional lands of Israel. His journeys took him to Phoenicia, Syria and the Decapolis, areas that today make up the countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Jews and Gentiles lived side-by-side in these areas, and archaeological evidence reveals a certain level of religious openness in both cultures. The Gentiles in this region had a special respect for Jewish healers, who enjoyed a reputation for power over illness and demonic forces. This religious culture provided fertile ground both for Jesus' own ministry and later for the early church, which by the last decades of the first century had grown considerably throughout these areas.

Several features of this narrative are odd. Mark gives no information about the afflicted man or the people who bring him to Jesus. In stark contrast to the healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, which Jesus performed with a simple compliment to the mother's faith, this healing appears quite complicated, and Mark gives us no insight into the faith of the people involved.

Jesus performs a series of complicated ritual actions that included spitting, groaning, touching and looking to heaven, as well as the use of a word, *ephphatha*, whose syntax does not conform to any scholarly understanding of Aramaic or Hebrew. The significance of these actions is unclear. In his own account of this miracle, Matthew glosses over them, noting only that Jesus cured "the lame, the blind, the deformed, the mute, and many others" (Mt 15:30). One gets a sense that Jesus' earthiness—his folk medicine and drawling Aramaic—embarrassed Matthew as much as it delighted Mark. (Luke omits the episode entirely).

The actions have a point. Many of Jesus' miracles happen in conversation with the suffering person: "Your faith has healed you...." "I will do it, be clean..." "Talitha koum."

'He has done all things well.'
(Mk 7:37)



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How has Jesus restored your awareness and your voice?

Who can perceive God's grace because of you?

Who has a voice because of you?

This was not an option with a man who could neither hear nor speak. Jesus' rituals here were a form of communication, a way of getting the man's attention and trust in order to prepare him for the event to come.

But these vivid details might distract our attention from Mark's focus. In this Sunday's first reading, Isaiah prophesied that the age to come would arrive with miraculous healings of the deaf and mute. Jesus' action fulfills this prophecy and symbolizes the arrival of the messianic age. The healing had an instant multiplier effect; the entire crowd found its voice when they heard the healed man speak. Jesus opened them to a new perception of God's grace, and they gave voice to their new awareness with vigor.

This mission continues today. Just as Christ may have taken vivid and unique actions to get our attention, so we must learn how to show ourselves trustworthy to even the most obstructed heart. If we do so, we can free the tongues of many and listen in wonder as they find their voices.

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

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Take Up Your Cross

Readings: Is 50:5-9, Ps 116, Jas 2:14-18, Mk 8:27-35

This Sunday's Gospel reading is a crucial text in the divine "rescue mission" Mark outlines in his Gospel. Up to now, Mark has focused on the "rescuer," describing Jesus' messianic characteristics. From this point on, Mark focuses instead on the characteristics of the "rescued," those who wish to follow after Christ when he comes again. Any who wish to do so, Mark explains, must follow the example of Isaiah's suffering servant, the example that Jesus himself embodied on his way to the cross.

A small narrative arc in Mk 7:24 to 8:35 marks a decisive pivot. Jesus had at first traveled primarily throughout Galilee. After some initial success, he experienced hostility from family, friends and fellow pious Israelites. In Mk 7:24, Jesus departed for the foreign territories north and east of Galilee, where he experienced great success and received so much attention that he had to warn people to stop talking about him.

Some of this desire for anonymity was undoubtedly due to the hostility that followed him. The Romans and their local collaborators dealt harshly with anyone who showed independent political pretensions. For the crime of criticizing a petty king, John the Baptist had already lost his life. Jesus must have suspected that the growing excitement around him would surely invite similar wrath.

'Who do people say that I am?' (Mk 8:27)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Who do you say that Christ is?

What happens when Christ does not fulfill your expectations?

How have you taken up your cross and followed him?

Yet Jesus could not let go of his mission. The narratives in this section of Mark's Gospel have a poignancy to them. Jesus turns no one away, but he also begs people not to tell anyone what he had said or done (Mk 7:36; 8:26, 30). He had only to look at the gibbets outside every walled town to know the fate that awaited anyone unable to keep a low profile.

He was not reticent because he feared death. It was instead, according to Mark, because he wanted to reveal his identity on his own terms. He knew that he was not the royal messiah people hoped for. When Peter and the other disciples came to realize that Jesus' miracles resonated strongly with the messianic visions of Isaiah and other prophetic texts, the issue came to a head.

Jesus was working from a fuller reading of Isaiah than the disciples had imagined. They saw the deaf hear and the mute speak and the blind see, but they did not realize that only because Jesus had accepted the role of the suffering servant described in this Sunday's first reading was he able to perform these works. Jesus' journeys took him past crucifixion sites on every Roman road. He identified with the criminals exposed there, recognizing that his own actions would lead to the same fate.

He also knew that any who took up his work would risk the same outcome. The Lord's rescue mission is a strange one. Anyone who wishes to be saved must risk the hostility, punishment and humiliation that our rescuer first experienced. Whether that risk leads to the death of the body or only the death of the ego makes no difference. Any who follow Christ must accept that to rescue others, one must first accept a cross. The temporary humiliation of some can ensure the eternal salvation of many.

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

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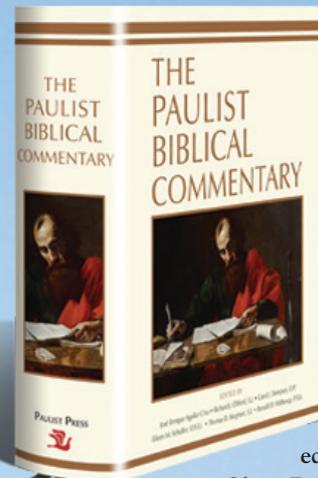
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Dear Millennials

Run, don't walk, to your vocation

By Catherine Hadro



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Life is a series of decisions, and we millennials are having trouble making them. Part of the problem, I believe, is the contraceptive culture we inhabit. The introduction of the birth control pill in 1960 pushed forward the falsehood that we can have control of the unknown future and need only be open to life at the “perfect” time—after the degree, the dream vacation, the down payment on the house. But the weeds of this empty promise have spread far outside the bedroom.

Today we live in a culture of fear that feeds the dark “what ifs” deep in our minds, the insecurities, the unknowns. What if having another child means a more chaotic home life? What if not making enough money strains our marriage? What if I fail at the job I am pursuing?

While we millennials are unfairly blamed for any number of social ills, there is one stereotype that strikes me as uncomfortably true: My generation is indecisive. Take a look at Exhibit A, the rates of delayed marriage. In 1990, the year I was born, 44 percent of young adults ages 18 to 34 were married. By 2016, that number had dived down to 26 percent. The stunning statistics do not stop there. The U.S. fertility rate is also at a historic low. The hesitation to embrace the gift of marriage and life strikes at the family and, I believe, stems from fear of what the future holds.

I understand well the “what ifs”

that can plague and paralyze the mind. I come from three generations of divorce, and during my recent engagement period, many of my fears surrounding marriage came to the surface. What if you repeat the pattern? What if you are not happy? What if you discerned wrong? But now, on the other side of giving my yes, peace shines through.

My husband recently shared a quotation that resonated with me, and I would like to pass it along. I especially want to encourage my fellow millennial Catholics to sit and pray with it for a while. The passage is from St. Francis de Sales, found in the compilation *Consoling Thoughts: On Trials of an Interior Life*:

It is not those who commit the least number of faults who are the most holy, but those who have the greatest courage, the greatest generosity, the greatest love, who make the boldest efforts to overcome themselves, and are not immoderately apprehensive of tripping, or even of failing and being dirtied a little, provided they advance.

We are designed to be great saints. But we will never get there if we make our perpetual-discernment bubble our safe space for fear of making a false step. To be a disciple, you must be

a decision-maker. When Jesus called Matthew, the tax collector did not respond, “Can you wait until I make a pros-and-cons list first?” No, “He got up and followed him.” (Mt 9:9). Matthew responded with an immediacy we should imitate today.

This is not all meant to downplay the importance of discernment; I hope to emphasize it. It is important to frequent the sacraments, to seek a spiritual advisor and, if you are engaged, to find a mentor couple. The closer you are to Christ, the more confidently you can trust your instincts. But prudence is not holding back—it is discerning how to best move forward.

Do not be afraid of the unknown future parts of life. You will inevitably fall, but trust in God and your ability to discern. Because in a world that glorifies “choice,” we would be better off to start making some decisions.

Catherine Hadro is the host of “EWTN Pro-Life Weekly,” a television program dedicated to the pro-life issue from a Catholic perspective. She currently resides near Washington, D.C., with her husband. Twitter: @CatSzeltner.



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