

America

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Pope Francis in the U.S.

FALL BOOKS 1

OF MANY THINGS

Were a long way from the world of Charles Carroll, the wealthy landowner (and slave owner, sad to say) who has the distinction of being the only Catholic and the longest-lived and last surviving signatory to the Declaration of Independence. A member of the Continental Congress, the predecessor of the present 114th Congress, he was also the brother of John Carroll, who was a Jesuit before he became an archbishop, like Pope Francis, and became the founder of Georgetown University.

The world we know now is far removed from that of the brothers Carroll, a time when anti-Catholicism was a national pastime. Most of our founding fathers, faithful sons of reformed Protestantism that they were, did not care for Roman Catholics. John Adams, the first president to live in the White House, was no different. He had a particular dislike of Jesuits and once told his friend Thomas Jefferson: "If ever there was a body of men who merited eternal damnation on earth and in hell it is this Society of Loyolá's." So what would he think, not only of a pope visiting the White House, but of a pope who also happens to be a Jesuit? Hard to know, of course, but we can say this at least: It says something great about the country that Mr. Adams helped to found that over two centuries we have enlarged our understanding of its founding traditions and have overcome Mr. Adams's sectarian prejudice.

A mere 50 years ago we had a vigorous debate in this country about whether a Catholic could or should be elected president. Now just this month the Pope of the Holy See, as he was introduced by the sergeant at arms in the House chamber, addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress. In many ways, the pope's address marked the complete emergence of Catholic America from the social and political ghetto to which it was relegated for much of American history. Unity in diversity, *e pluribus unum*, is the

American story. "I think it's sort of the history of the journey of this country," Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. says during the interview with him in this issue. "If you think about it, it's always been in the direction of inclusiveness, always in the direction of acceptance, always in the direction of expanding rights and recognizing differences.... I think it's what makes America the unique country in the world."

The present U.S. Congress is 30 percent Catholic. In recent weeks, we have heard from prominent American Catholics like Stephen Colbert as they've talked about how their faith shapes their lives and careers. There is a good chance that the next president will be a Catholic. Will the pope's address and his visit to the U.S. encourage Catholic elected officials and even ordinary citizens to speak more freely about their faith, whether it's on "Nightline," "The Late Show" or at a New England town meeting or a Starbucks in Sacramento? How do American Catholics continue to maneuver between their faith and their public life in light of what the pope has said? Whether it is climate change, abortion, the death penalty or war and peace, most Americans have some difference of opinion with Francis and the social vision he champions. Those are just a few of the questions we are left with as the pope returns to Rome.

America Media will continue to explore those questions and more in the weeks and months ahead. In the meantime, I wish to extend my thanks to you, our subscribers and audience. Your support makes it all possible. The week of the pope's visit was an exceptional moment in the life of this media ministry and, more important, for the church in this country. You should know that the staff worked round the clock for days, covering every angle. I am grateful for their dedication and skill. You can revisit the fruits of those labors at papalvisit.americamedia.org.

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Cover: Pope Francis waves to crowds as he arrives at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 23, 2015. Reuters/Tony Gentile

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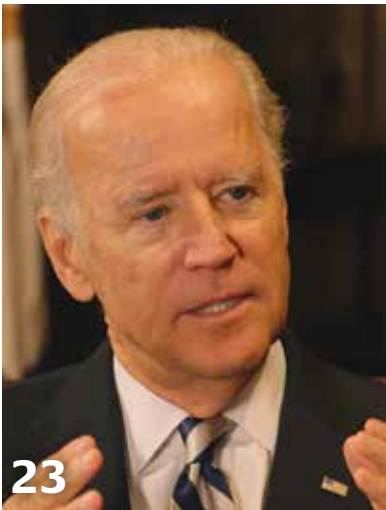
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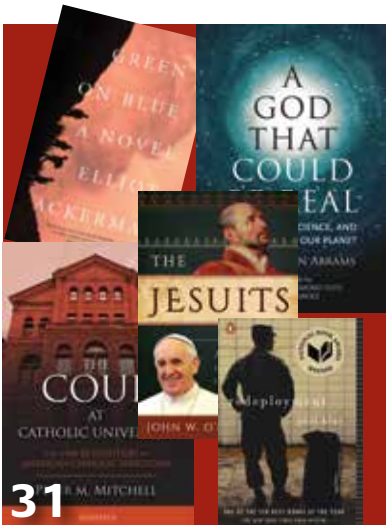
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POEM As Eddie Fisher Catches Fire **OF OTHER THINGS** Where Were You? **ART** Koki Ruiz and an altar of corn for the pope



ON THE WEB

Full coverage of **Pope Francis' visit to the United States** with on-site reporting from **America's** editors and contributors. Visit papalvisit.americamedia.org for commentary, photos and a timeline of the papal trip.



A Visit of Papal Firsts; Francis Comes to America



TOUR DE FRANCIS. The pope on his way to the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families.

As the end of a memorable and historic visit with the neighboring people of the United States and Cuba, Pope Francis closed out the 2015 World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia on Sept. 27 with a Mass along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway that was attended by hundreds of thousands.

It had been another full day for the pope, one that included a conversation with victims of childhood abuse and their families, a visit with inmates at a Philadelphia correctional facility and an unscheduled detour to the Jesuit-run St. Joseph's University, where he blessed a statue commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions."

In Washington Pope Francis canonized a controversial saint, Franciscan Junípero Serra, and met with the nation's most powerful in Congress and its most vulnerable at a center for homeless people. He also shared his vision of pastorally driven leadership with U.S. bishops.

In New York, he spoke before the

United Nations and among school children in Harlem; at the newly restored St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, he embraced America's religious women. Pope Francis joined in an interreligious prayer for peace at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, and he bumped Billy Joel from the schedule at Madison Square

Garden, delivering a homily that moved millions around the world, who watched the celebration live.

His choice of destinations on this 10th excursion from Rome was as symbolic as any of the other gestures that followed his return to the New World, uniting Cuba and the United States by air travel just as he had proved a uniter through Vatican-hosted discussions that helped defrost five decades of enmity between the two nations.

Thousands who experienced the pope's U.S. visit in person and millions more who watched it unfold on television and other media were transfixed by this historic tour of three major East Coast cities. They were—Catholic and non-Catholic, believers

and nonbelievers—brought together by the pope’s humble, joyful presence and his simple reminder to president and city pedestrians alike to reach out

in mercy to one another and to the strangers among us, to remember the Golden Rule and to always, always, “Please pray for me.”

Congress members. A call to end the arms trade, which he suggested produced profit “drenched in blood,” drew a more subdued response. (The United States is the world leader in arms exports.) The pope included among his concerns for life a call to end the death penalty.

WASHINGTON

Pope Calls Congress to Task

Francis, the first pope ever to address the United States Congress, provoked sustained applause by his very first words, expressing his gratitude for the invitation to address this joint session of Congress in “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

Many veteran politicians, including Speaker of the House John Boehner, were moved to tears as they strained to hear the pope speaking softly in English even as he touched on a number of potentially incendiary issues in the U.S. Congress, from immigration to the death penalty and a consistent defense of life. The Golden Rule, he

told Congress, requires us to respond generously to global neighbors migrating from the south and “also reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development.”

He told Congress on Sept. 24, “The world is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War” and called for a response that is “always humane, just and fraternal.”

His mention of the care of creation, care of migrants and care of the family in American life, threatened, he worried, by forces “from within and without,” drew sustained applause from

“We, the people of this continent,” he told Congress, “are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners.”

Pope Francis stressed the importance of dialogue in resolving international disputes (a reference to Iran and Cuba), his endorsement of the need to respond to the crisis of climate change and the promotion of a more merciful response to global migrants.

Pope Francis knew that his address represented a unique opportunity to raise issues that are of fundamental importance and to influence the most powerful and richest nation on earth, and he did not waste it. He spoke in a fraternal way to the lawmakers—31



MAKING HISTORY. Pope Francis addresses a joint session of Congress in the House chamber in Washington on Sept. 24.

percent of whom are Catholic—about the need to be especially attentive to “fundamentalism, whether religious or of any other kind.” He said it is necessary to guard against “the simple reductionism which sees only good and evil...the righteous and sinners” and

to “confront every form of polarization which would divide” the world “into these two camps.”

He affirmed that “if politics must truly be at the service of the human person, it follows that it cannot be a slave to the economy and finance.”

UNITED NATIONS

Francis: ‘How to End Exclusion?’



GREETINGS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomes Pope Francis

Whether they are dealing with war, development, the economy or environmental concerns, bureaucrats and diplomats must always remember that the lives of real children, women and men are at stake, Pope Francis told the United Nations. Helping to celebrate the organization’s 70th anniversary, Pope Francis visited its headquarters on Sept. 25 and pleaded with government leaders and U.N. officials to keep the dignity and sacredness of every human life and the value of all creatures at the center of their concern.

“Above and beyond our plans and programs,” he told the U.N. General

Assembly, “we are dealing with real men and women who live, struggle and suffer and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights.”

Advocates in global relief and development, debt relief and nuclear abolition were among the many cheered by Pope Francis’ address. “The Holy Father’s U.N. speech raised the bar again for political and economic leaders: we must prevent the exclusion, inequality and war that Catholic Relief Services is responding to in so many countries,” said Bill O’Keefe, C.R.S.’s vice president for government relations and advocacy.

In his address, Pope Francis support-

ed the new global 15-year Sustainable Development Goals, O’Keefe said, “but reminded us all that success must be judged by the simple reality of whether real people have housing, food, education and the basic rights entitled to all as creatures of God.”

Pope Francis called for real, concrete action to stem climate change; respect for every human life and for “the natural difference between man and woman”; economic decisions that place the needs of people before profits. He challenged the moral legitimacy of nuclear deterrence and called for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

He praised recent international agreements with Iran and pleaded for concrete, multilateral efforts to bring peace and justice to the Middle East, North Africa and other African countries plagued by the violence of extremists claiming to act in the name of Islam. “Christians, together with other cultural or ethnic groups and even members of the majority religion who have no desire to be caught up in hatred and folly,” he said, “have been forced to witness the destruction of their places of worship, their cultural and religious heritage, their houses and property, and have faced the alternative either of fleeing or of paying for their adhesion to good and to peace by their own lives or by enslavement.”

Those lives, he said, “take precedence over partisan interests.”

“In wars and conflicts there are individual persons—our brothers and sisters, men and women, young and old, boys and girls—who weep, suffer and die,” the pope said. They are treated as “human beings who are easily discarded when our only response is to draw up lists of problems, strategies and disagreements.

FRANCIS ON FIFTH AVENUE. Members of the Missionaries of Charity cheer as Pope Francis arrives at St. Patrick's Cathedral.



PAPAL MESSAGES

‘Go Out to Others; Share the Good News’

Pope Francis urged the hundreds of thousands of people gathered for the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families on Sept. 27 to serve and care for each other as freely as God loves the human family.

The pope called upon the faithful to embrace signs that the Holy Spirit can work through everyone. “To raise doubts about the working of the Spirit, to give the impression that it cannot take place in those who are not ‘part of our group,’ who are not ‘like us,’ is a dangerous temptation,” the pope said. “Not only does it block conversion to the faith; it is a perversion of faith. Faith opens a window to the presence and working of the Spirit. It shows us that, like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures.”

Pope Francis held up the family as vital to building the church for the future. He said love must be freely shared for faith to grow.

“That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to become faith,” he said.

Just days before, seeing New York for the first time, Pope Francis, 78, said true peace in a big city comes from seeing the vast variety of people not as a bother, but as a brother or sister. The pope urged the “congregation” at New York’s Madison Square Garden to go out into the city, to seek the face of Jesus in the poor and suffering and to share the joy of the Gospel with all.

“Go out to others and share the good news that God, our father, walks at our side,” the pope said. Jesus “frees us from anonymity, from a life of emptiness and selfishness” and moves people to encounter and to peace instead of competition.

Pope Francis drew three rounds of spontaneous and prolonged applause when, during his homily at St Patrick’s Cathedral in New York on Sept. 24, he praised women religious. “In a special way I would like to express my esteem and gratitude to the religious women of the United States. What would the church be without you?... To you, religious women, sisters and mothers of this people, I wish to say ‘thank you,’ a big

thank you...and to tell you that I love you very much.”

Pope Francis had already spoken about the terrible impact of the abuse scandal on the church when he spoke to more than 300 bishops at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in Washington, D.C, the day before, but he returned to this theme again in New York.

“I know,” he said, speaking to the priests attending the vespers service, “that, as a presbyterate in the midst of God’s people, you suffered greatly in the not distant past by having to bear the shame of some of your brothers who harmed and scandalized the church in the most vulnerable of her members....

In the words of the Book of Revelation, I know well that you ‘have come forth from the great tribulation,’ and I accompany you at this time of pain and difficulty, and I thank God for your faithful service to his people.”

The pope also addressed the subject from the perspective of the victims of abuse during a private meeting with a group of abuse survivors in Philadelphia

on Sept. 27 at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. The pope pledged “the zealous vigilance of the church to protect children and the promise of accountability for all,” adding that the “crimes and sins of sexual abuse of children can longer remain in secret.”

“I hold the stories and the suffering

and the sorrow of children who were sexually abused by priests deep in my heart,” Pope Francis said later that day. “I remain overwhelmed with shame that men entrusted with the tender care of children violated these little ones and caused grievous harm. I am profoundly sorry. God weeps.”

PAPAL VISITS

The Pope of the Peripheries

“We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing,” Pope Francis told hundreds of homeless people in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 24. He met them in the 220-year-old Church of Saint Patrick and told them, “There are many unjust situations, but we know that God is suffering with us, experiencing them at our side. He does not abandon us.”

Significantly, the pope came for lunch with some of Washington’s homeless people immediately after delivering a historic, and much applauded, address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

“You make me think of St. Joseph,” he told the homeless, clients of the local Catholic Charities. “I can imagine Joseph, with his wife about to have a child, with no shelter, no home, no place to stay. The Son of God came into this world as a homeless person. The Son of God knew what it was to start life without a roof over his head,” he said.

Francis told them: “We can imagine what Joseph must have been thinking. How is it that the Son of God has no home? Why are we homeless, why don’t we have housing?

“These are questions which many of you may ask daily,” he said. Indeed, “these are questions which all of us might well ask. Why do these, our brothers and sisters, have no place to live? Why are these brothers and sisters of ours homeless?”

In East Harlem on Sept. 25, Pope Francis encouraged an audience of Catholic school students and im-



migrants to live with joy and dare to dream. “They tell me that one of the nice things about this school is that some of its students come from other places, even from other countries,” Pope Francis told students and a group of immigrants at the Our Lady Queen of Angels school. “I know that it is not easy to have to move and find a new home, new neighbors and new friends,” the pope said.

The pope spoke of dreams and invoked another religious leader, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. “One day he said, ‘I have a dream.’ His dream was that many children, many people could have equal opportunities. His dream was that many children like you could get an education,” the pope said. “Wherever there are dreams, there is joy; Jesus is always present,” he said.

While pilgrims in Philadelphia put up with a long weekend of lines and security checks at the papal venues, the pope reached out to a group of people whose lives will be hemmed in by lines and security checks for years at a time. Pope Francis spent about an hour at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility on Sept. 27.

As debates continue in the United States over the need for penal reform, Pope Francis said prisons must focus on rehabilitation, and he insisted that no one is perfect and without need of forgiveness. The pope told the inmates he was visiting as a pastor, “but mostly as a brother.”

The pope spoke to the inmates about Jesus washing his disciples’ feet, explaining that back in those days, people wore sandals and the roads were dusty. Everyone needed to have his or her feet cleaned.

“It is painful when we see people who think that

only others need to be cleansed, purified, and do not recognize that their weariness, pain and wounds are also the weariness, pain and wounds of society,” Pope Francis continued.

The pope urged the prisoners to dedicate their time in prison to “getting back on the right road” and preparing to rejoin society.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

Accused in Peoria

Peoria is a gritty industrial city on the banks of the Illinois River. Like many an old manufacturing base, it has experienced economic downturns, periodic crime waves and growing poverty. Yet its citizens endure. Their common-sense Midwestern values still prompt the famous expression, “Will it play in Peoria?”

On the city’s struggling south side, St. Ann Catholic Church has long served as an anchor. Now St. Ann is finding itself unmoored. In August, the Diocese of Peoria removed its popular pastor, the Rev. Terry Cassidy, citing “credible evidence” of a 30-year-old incident of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Parishioners describe Cassidy, 63, as a committed, caring priest, unafraid to share his own foibles and struggles. One of his favorite messages is emblazoned on a banner overhanging the altar: “God Is Too Busy Loving Us to Be Disappointed in Us.”

A few days after the news broke, the parish held a prayer vigil at the towering Romanesque-style church. One member said it was a way not only of supporting Cassidy but also of “holding the parish together.” As the service began, a staff member rose and told the packed church she had heard from Father Cassidy. “He wants you to know he is innocent and that he will not resign as pastor,” she said. Parishioners rose from the pews and cheered.

The crucible St. Ann parishioners are facing underscores the complexi-

ties and tensions that arise when a pastor is accused. It has been more than a decade since the church adopted standards for handling abuse allegations. But there is no standard procedure, no moral road map, for those left behind at the parish to grapple with the aftermath of such a disclosure. They face navigating a precipice between supporting a well-loved priest while also acknowledging the trauma victims

But there is
no standard procedure,
no moral road map,
for those left behind.

suffer. The lack of details released by the diocese—was it one allegation or several, one accuser or many?—added to the frustration many St. Ann’s parishioners felt.

The parishioners’ public display of support immediately drew protests from the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests. “Every time parishioners rally around a credibly accused child molesting cleric, it’s sad, tiresome and hurtful to vulnerable kids and ultimately to the parish itself,” a SNAP statement said. “Because the priest is good at this or that—homilies, service work, one-on-one counseling or boosting church membership—parishioners somehow can’t imagine that he can simultaneously be sick at some deep emotional level.”

David Clohessy, a SNAP spokesman, says victims, witnesses and whistle-blowers are less likely to come forward if they think parishioners will be hostile. SNAP’s website contains a

suggested set of guidelines for “What to Do When Your Priest Is Accused of Abuse.” It advises: “Support the accused priest privately. Calls, visits, gifts and prayers, all of these are appropriate ways to express your love and concern.... You may want to publicly defend a priest, collect funds for the priest’s defense.... Please don’t.”

Tom Wiegand, a businessman who has attended St. Ann for 20 years, says parishioners there understand this. The prayers of petition at the vigil, which he read, included prayers not only for Cassidy but for “all victims of abuse...caregivers, families and professionals who provide support and treatment to victims of abuse...and those who are angry, bitter or sad.” But with emotions raw and the future of the parish uncertain, the congregation’s attempts to strike a balance remain a struggle.

“I’ve been angry at God, angry at others, angry that my [parish] family is hurting and that I’m hurting,” one parish council member, Ellen Tallon, said.

The Rev. Tom Kelly, a retired priest who attended the St. Ann’s vigil, called Cassidy a gifted priest who he believes is innocent. But Kelly adds, “If it’s a matter of fact that Terry is guilty, then despite the enormous good he’s done, he must be put on the sidelines.... It’s just horrendous the spiritual and emotional damage that is done” to abuse victims.

The Rev. Steven Tibbetts, pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, worked with Cassidy on Cursillo retreats and says he too hopes Cassidy will be cleared. His comments at the St. Ann vigil seemed to sum up the road ahead for the parish: “How can churches become places where sins are acknowledged and ultimately forgiven?” For now, the people of St. Ann’s are praying for an answer.

JUDITH VALENTE

JUDITH VALENTE, *America’s Chicago correspondent*, is a regular contributor to NPR and “Religion & Ethics Newsweekly.” Twitter: @JudithValente.

REPLY ALL

Conversion in Cuba

Re “A Tale of Two Countries,” by Miguel Díaz (9/21): It is beautiful and appropriate to wax poetic about mercy. We should all abide by these timeless truths. Yet the call of Christ is conversion. To simply plead for mercy in Cuba while not demanding conversion of the Castros misses the mark. If they refuse to convert, we cannot reward Cuba with tourism. Argentina’s military dictator, Jorge Videla, met his demise with justice as part of it. Likewise, the Castros must meet the same. “Life-on-the-hyphen” is difficult. *Lo conozco muy bien.* Life as an asterisk is far worse and a mockery of Christ.

GUILLERMO REYES

Online Comment

Listening From Behind

In “Having the God Talk” (9/21), Helen Alvaré presents great ideas for “introducing” her son to Jesus. As the father of two young women, ages 16 and 21, I would simply add, respectfully, to let him lead the conversation and pose critical questions. Relying on your knowledge and sources, let him see your own faith, struggles and above all love for others, for God and for him. Listening well and responding from your own faith experience, richly informed as it is, are worth more than any author, any readings you might

share. And if he isn’t already connected, help him connect to a community of faith and to peers who share his concerns and questions as well as his faith. They too will be a stronger and enduring force in his life that will sustain him in his faith.

DOUGLAS CREMER

Online Comment

Advancing Where?

In “Our Armed Society” (9/14), Firmin DeBrabander writes the United States is alone among “the so-called advanced societies” in which there are regular mass shootings. No doubt we need to work on the conversion of people to Christ. That will solve a myriad of society’s problems. But there are other issues to consider: Are the “so-called advanced societies” also those that promote killing the unborn the most? Or that are moving down the path of euthanasia?

In Chicago guns are highly regulated, but the murder rate is sky high. The suburbs have fewer restrictions and a fraction of the violence. So will more regulation help? Perhaps the most deranged will be denied a permit; but if gang members can get guns, the deranged also may just buy illegal guns. Historically, the largest number of innocents killed (post-birth) has been by governments against unarmed populaces. The Second Amendment is a protection

against government tyranny.

JAMES BANNON

Online Comment

Carter’s Gift

Re *Of Many Things*, by Matt Malone, S.J. (8/31): About a week before former President Jimmy Carter made the announcement that he had cancer, my nephew and his wife and their four young sons went to Plains, Ga. They happened to be there for Sunday school, led by President Carter. Carter was gracious and so generous with his time, they said, taking questions from his sons—“What do you think of U.F.O.’s?”—and patiently answering them. He and his wife Rosalyn posed for family photos with them. These photos will be keepsakes for my nephew and his family, probably passed down for generations.

BETH CIOFFOLETTI

Online Comment

The Next Generation

Re “Progress Report,” by Joe Paprocki (8/31): Having worked in a ministry for people in their 20s and 30s for the past five years, I am keenly aware that we don’t have long to get this right. Many years after “Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us,” the U.S. bishops’ plan for adult formation, we still focus our resources on children. There have certainly been improvements, but, well...it’s easier to reach the children. Adult formation is hard. It takes energy and creativity and a listening heart. But parents who are indifferent about faith do not raise children in the faith. We have only to look at the very low level of Catholic marriages and baptisms to know that we are in danger of losing a generation.

I am hopeful, though! Pope Francis is setting forth a vision that resonates with people precisely because it speaks to their daily lives. Young people are listening and, as one of them said, they are “cautiously optimistic.” There are wonderful, talented, faithful young adults who will help move us into new



ways of forming believers in the faith, augmenting what happens in community with modern tools of communication, which are mobile and flexible and fit their lives—if we let them.

PAM COSTER
Online Comment

Bad News Burn-Out

America reports in “Overcoming Indifference” (Signs of the Times, 8/31), “Pope Francis has chosen ‘Overcome indifference and win peace’ as the theme for the church’s celebration of the next World Day of Peace.” Are most people indifferent, or do they simply feel overwhelmed? The information revolution has meant that almost everyone, almost everywhere is constantly bombarded with news—often very graphic—about every tragedy, disaster and war going on in the world, along with countless “news stories” of human corruption of every type, great and small, of human cruelty, of man’s inhumanity toward fellow human beings. This massive onslaught of terrible news can engender a feeling of helplessness. This is not the same as indifference.

ANNE CHAPMAN
Online Comment

Truth Out

I applaud the editorial “Selling the Unborn” (8/17). If there is any positive aspect to the revolting commerce in body parts from aborted fetuses, it is that it underscores the fact that these body parts are human. The constitutional chicanery in abortion decisions like *Roe v. Wade* has been revealed for all to see. It is high time that the Supreme Court overturn the appalling decisions that effectively legalize abortion on demand and that thereby promote the sale of human fetal body parts.

RICHARD H. ESCOBALES JR.
Buffalo, N.Y.

f STATUS UPDATE

On our *In All Things* blog, retired Bishop Francis Quinn of Sacramento tells Luke Hansen, S.J., “I can’t see any reason why women shouldn’t be priests” (“California Bishop Voices Support for the Ordination of Women,” 9/18). *Readers respond.*

As a priest for 32 years working in parish ministry, I am puzzled by the continued shortage of religious vocations and how the church hierarchy responds to this crisis. We teach that Mass is the source and summit of our Catholic faith, but the hierarchy is willing to deny communities the Eucharist because there are not enough priests to go around. Many people decide that if the Catholic Church cannot provide clergy to staff our churches and celebrate the Eucharist, then they will just find another church or denomination that can meet their spiritual needs. Don’t invite people to the table and then allow them to starve.

MICHAEL GRIECO

I’m a woman and a Catholic involved in several ministries. I don’t want women clergy. I think women have many talents and many roles in the church. I don’t think both sexes have to do everything equally. Men don’t have babies. Women don’t have to consecrate the host. God made us male and female. I know it’s not a popular position, but it’s what I believe.

SUSAN HENGGELER

The article says the retired bishop was inspired to speak out by the encouragement of the pope, but the author seems to neglect that Pope Francis has said, just recently, this is a settled matter.

ALAN G. SIDES

Every so often, we’re asked to pray for more vocations to the priesthood. That always strikes me as strange: doesn’t God know how many priests the church needs? Maybe, just maybe, he’s calling married people and women to the priesthood, but it’s the church hierarchy that isn’t listening.

HELENE OSSIPOV

Unreliable Sources

Nicholas P. Cafardi’s review of Gerald Posner’s book, *God’s Bankers: A History of Money and Power at the Vatican Bank*, is disappointing (“Follow the Money,” 7/20). Mr. Cafardi fails to address some of Mr. Posner’s more controversial claims.

Mr. Posner repeats, for example, an allegation that the Vatican Bank accepted gold looted from Holocaust victims by the pro-Nazi Croatian dictatorship. The source of this allegation is a single-page U.S. intelligence report that reports a “rumor” from an anonymous source in Italy. No evidence corroborating this allegation, which first surfaced in 1997, has ever been found.

The main sources of allegations that “the Vatican” sheltered Nazi war criminals and helped them escape to South America are postwar U.S. intelligence documents, which often reported unverified information by unnamed sources. The fact that the 2003 invasion of Iraq failed to locate any weapons of mass destruction—despite the fact that the intelligence agencies of the United States and other countries all agreed that Saddam Hussein did possess them—should show the dangers of relying exclusively on intelligence reports for either policymaking or historical scholarship.

DIMITRI CAVALLI
Bronx, N.Y.

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Basic Justice

The economy of Christianity is weird. It doesn't seem to work the way worldly economies do; the prodigal son gets a party, and the poor will inherit the kingdom. Then again, worldly economies are weird, too. Hard-working people die in poverty, and children go hungry in the richest country on earth.

Our economies are getting weird enough, for instance, that a certain strange economic idea is starting to get a lot of attention, on both the right and the left: that everybody should receive an equal, substantial paycheck just for being alive. This "guaranteed basic income" comes in many forms, and has several names, but the general idea is quite simple—and, to many of us, quite shocking, although it isn't especially new.

Thomas Paine proposed a payout to everyone upon reaching adulthood, as well as pensions for the elderly; he considered these just recompense for the private takeover of the common land that had been the basis of medieval subsistence. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of basic income as a step toward racial justice. Basic income is one of the few ideas that the economists John Kenneth Galbraith and Milton Friedman agreed about; Richard Nixon proposed something similar as a means of welfare reform. Margaret Mead and Buckminster Fuller considered it a prerequisite for human flourishing. Alaska pays out a modest sum to every resident from the state's energy revenue, and the progressive entrepreneur Peter Barnes has made a case

that a similar policy could both slow climate change and rescue the middle class. The libertarian political scientist Charles Murray, meanwhile, sees in it a means of shrinking the government. Given the often crippling burden of student debt today, Paine's payout to the young makes a whole new kind of sense.

The idea of basic income has been catching on in tech culture lately, thanks to fears that new apps will eliminate millions of jobs for good. If we can still get paid, maybe the robot takeover would be a good thing. New experiments with basic income use digital currencies to bypass the old assumption that government is needed to implement it.

For all the renewed interest in this idea, I haven't seen a lot of talk about it among Christians, as such. Maybe we are especially committed to the notion that each person should get what he or she deserves? Then again, if that's the case, just about any arrangement would be better than what we have now.

Charles Clark is a Catholic economist at St. John's University who has been a basic income advocate ever since being asked to study the idea by the Conference of Religious in Ireland, and then by the Irish government, in the late 1990s. He argues that to consider basic income "something for nothing" misunderstands how truly interconnected the economy is. His research across Europe and North America suggests that a basic income would actually make production more efficient. He also believes that the idea reflects

the insistence in Catholic social teaching on the intrinsic value of every person. It would free people to participate more fully in family life and combat the individualism that an "every man for himself" economy teaches us.

"A basic income is the easiest way to bring everyone above the poverty line and reduce income inequality without making major structural changes to the economy," Clark says. But it will require a change in mindset for many people, he adds. With a basic income, "everyone has a right to share in the benefits of social output."

Catholic tradition can also help us think about basic income in sharper ways. Perhaps, as the school of distributism teaches, we should focus on spreading out the means of production, not the means of consumption—40 acres and a mule rather than a pile of cash. The principle of subsidiarity suggests that we should be wary of depending for our livelihood on a central source. If we rely on a distant government for an income, what subtle or unspoken terms could that government impose?

I recently received an email from a reader in England, Craig Clarke, encouraging me to pursue the connections between theology and basic income. He brought up a biblical proof-text I hadn't thought of yet. "Perhaps Christ was given gold as a child so that he did not have the bondage of money," Clarke suggested. "Is it time for us to invest in all people just as the Wise Men invested in Christ?"

The idea of basic income has been catching on in tech culture lately.

NATHAN SCHNEIDER is the author of *Thank You, Anarchy and God in Proof*. Website: *TheRowBoat.com*; Twitter: *@nathanairplane*.

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Doctrinal Solutions

As the synod convenes, wisdom from Karl Rahner

BY PETER FOLAN

If this October is anything like last year's, the press covering the Synod of Bishops will focus almost exclusively on homosexuality and the possibility of divorced and civilly remarried Catholics receiving Holy Communion. That emphasis is understandable, since there is certainly division among Catholics on both issues.

Not surprisingly, the press frames the synod as merely a political contest boiling down to which "side" has the numbers to win. This approach ignores the fact that the synod's pastoral conversation about homosexuality, divorce and the sacraments will be framed by the church's faith, including the articulation of that faith in doctrine.

For many members of the Christian community, however, the invocation of "doctrine" might suggest the death of all hope. A popular perception of doctrine is that it is a set of rigid, uncompromising propositions that are handed down from on high: one obeys doctrine; one does not tend to look to it for help during life's difficulties.

For the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner (1904–84), on the other hand, doctrine enables the church to speak to the real problems of real people. Father Rahner calls doctrine that which, when put into words, proclaims the faith of the church in ordinary language, thereby leading people more deeply into relationship with God. Put differently, doctrine invites people into friendship with God by proclaiming what the church knows about God.

Doctrine extends to members of the church a helping hand rather than a wagging finger. This makes sense, given that doctrine exists to facilitate a relationship with God, not to provide instructions for avoiding divine wrath. Consequently, doctrine, like anything that reaches across cultures and epochs to address itself to human needs and desires, can fully make sense only in the context of those needs and desires. It can never be so abstract that it is disconnected from all particularities of time and place, nor can it be so technical that it is relevant for one time and one place only.

Calling on doctrine to fortify our relationships with God is not the same as saying that the church needs to produce

ever better, ever clearer explanations that cover all eventualities and all particularities. Indeed, attempting such a task would be futile.

One partner in the relationship—God—remains, as Father Rahner would put it, the "incomprehensible mystery" who exceeds our grasp, while the other partner—humanity—is constantly changing. Our concerns, ideas, languages and capacities are not identical to those of the generation before us, to say nothing of how different they are from those of our ancestors from centuries ago.

So doctrine must be dynamic enough to accompany the church in every generation, yet also reliable enough to teach us something about the unchanging God and to guide us in our life as a pilgrim church. This tension between reliability and connection to pastoral reality is not new; it has been present throughout the history of the church.

The argument that a given doctrine did not originate in response to pastoral challenges, that it is "unalloyed" or "chemically pure," to borrow helpful descriptors from Father Rahner, is tantamount to claiming that this particular doctrine floated down to the church from heaven. In fact, not only have all doctrines been the product of a preceding theological debate arising out of the complex historical situations in which the church lives its faith; they also, most important, undergo a process of reception, interpretation and application by councils, synods and local churches. Doctrines, then, renew the church or they die, remaining frozen in time, no longer enriching ecclesial life.

The church's history manifests this dynamic countless times. An early instance is in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which calls Jesus Christ "consubstantial with the Father." The title of the creed uses the names of both councils because the debate during and after Nicaea (325) regarding the use of "consubstantial" was so contentious that the bishops wanted to return to their local churches and gather in regional synods to consider the matter at greater length. Constantinople (381) did not bring about universal agreement, but it forged consensus and gave the church a statement of its belief, thus producing doctrine. Even in its "final" form, the creed continues to be interpreted by the church.



PETER FOLAN, S.J., is a doctoral student in theology at Boston College.

REACHING OUT. Mass in Manila, Philippines, on Jan 13.



Of course, the church does more than look backward, remembering its history. Because the church's primary orientation is forward, destined as it is for the fullness of the kingdom of God, doctrine that remains in conversation with pastoral realities proves to be not only a necessary companion but an ideal one along the pilgrim way.

Naturally, an ongoing conversation involving doctrine and pastoral realities carries risks with it. While striving to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit, sometimes the church mis-hears the Spirit or is unduly influenced by other voices. One must always guard against the possibility, in other words, that human beings are hearing themselves rather than God.

Father Rahner is not unaware of these risks. "The danger of the human factor simply remains a danger," he writes, "and no precautionary measures exist which can exclude it unambiguously at the very start.... It is the promise of the Spirit and that alone which prevents the final realization of an ever-present danger."

Informed by Father Rahner, and particularly by a number of articles in his multi-volume *Theological Investigations*, I offer three questions for the church to consider as it thinks through the challenging pastoral issues pertaining to its life today.

Where to begin?

It might seem obvious to begin with some doctrine of the church as a point of departure. Father Rahner would counsel otherwise. Precisely because doctrine flows from the church's experience of the living God, the starting point must be predoctrinal, which, in this instance, means prepropositional as well.

To help explain what prepropositional knowledge means, Father Rahner introduces the example of a young man falling in love. The young man's clumsy attempts to articulate his feelings to himself and to others are not, in themselves, the start of his love. He has an ineffable feeling, something precognitive that must be recognized as something.

But for the young man's love to grow, this feeling must be expressed in some way. Father Rahner writes, "Reflection upon oneself...in propositions...is thus a part of the progressive realization of love itself; it is not just a parallel phenomenon, without importance for the thing itself." An experience of love is neither the feeling alone, nor the recognition of the feeling alone, but precisely the experience of recognizing and naming what one is feeling. That is when we encounter the reality of love.

Father Rahner claims, "We discover the possible from the

real." And so the answer to the question of where to begin is simple: not with our propositions about what is real but with the real itself. This, after all, is how Jesus' first friends encountered him. He was not consubstantial with anyone, as far as they were concerned, nor were they worried about how many natures or wills he possessed; he said and did things that first made them reorient their whole lives; only later did they rethink them.

The church of today is not so different. When we address challenging pastoral situations, we should not immediately look for a doctrinal explanation or solution but should first make sure that we understand what is going on in the experience of the people affected.

Authentic use of Scripture

Since Scripture is the church's *norma normans non normata*, all authentic doctrine must conform to it. Any reading or application of doctrine that contradicts Scripture must be regarded as a false appropriation of the church's teaching.

It is important, however, to avoid the ways that Scripture has been erroneously used in the production of the church's doctrine. Father Rahner recognizes two of these patterns that seem to tempt the church in every age.

First, a "one-sided view of Scripture" treats the biblical text as if "each of its assertions [were] dogma and not merely theology." Scripture, then, does not amount to a handbook of doctrinal statements waiting to be cut-and-pasted into catechisms. Scripture contains both the original *kerygma* and the apostolic church's reflection upon it. Consequently, approaches to contentious issues in the life of the church will avoid abusing the biblical text and drawing false conclusions from it only when their reading of the text is sub-

jected to the most outstanding exegesis. Rigorous exegesis, as the Second Vatican Council's "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" teaches, will produce "a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture," thus allowing "the judgment of the church [to] mature."

Second, the four canonical Gospels, even the words attributed to Jesus himself, are not immune to misuse. Father Rahner writes, "[The modern theologian] can precisely not simply present every saying placed upon the lips of Jesus by the evangelists as his *ipsissima verba*." In its substance, this second way of misusing of Scripture does not differ from the first, but it bears mentioning in the church today, especially given the frequency with which certain words attributed to Jesus—the Matthean (19:7-9) and Marcan (10:11-13) sayings on divorce come to mind—have been recently invoked as demanding careful attention, most especially when real exegetical questions are dismissed on the grounds that the "plain sense" of Jesus' words is obvious.

How to proceed?

Determining how to proceed can begin by identifying past and current patterns we need to avoid or grow beyond. Father Rahner points us to three.

The first, what I name the "accretion model," holds that approaching a pastoral problem in conversation with the church's doctrine consists of brushing away whatever accretions—historical, theological, political, etc.—have obscured the church's view of a given doctrine. But this assumes that there was once a perfectly pristine doctrinal statement that became obscured and is now waiting to be (re)discovered. Father Rahner rejects this, believing instead, "All human statements, even those in which faith expresses God's saving truths, are finite. By this we mean that they never declare the *whole* of a reality."

The second is the "explication model," which would have the church address pastoral problems by taking a particular doctrine, with its inevitable limitedness, and using logic or reason to deduce other doctrines from it. This treats doctrine as a box containing a variety of objects rather than as a window to help see something non- or pre-propositional. Father Rahner makes clear, however, that for the church to listen to God's word means more than drawing deductions from it. The church engages in "a reflection on the propositions heard in living contact with the thing itself," that is, as it cultivates its relationship with

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God in light of its present historical situation.

The third model Father Rahner rejects is what I call the “isolation model” and its many manifestations. They all have one commonality: they look at a particular doctrine with tunnel vision, sometimes ignoring other relevant doctrines, or important cultural contexts, or even the liturgical life of the church. Father Rahner rejects this on account of his belief that, “In the last resort every reality, even the most limited, is connected with and related to every other reality,” and hence, in his view, all forms of the isolation model fail.

All three of these patterns can be seen in the church’s recent conversation: “We must return to Jesus’ precise teaching about marriage”; “But you are assuming that Jesus really meant to legislate”; “But you would abandon *all* doctrine on the principle that the only thing that matters is that people love, by which you mean ‘not offend’ one another.” And so on. Dialogue like this does not appear to be a fruitful way forward and indeed barely manages to be dialogue.

So if these are patterns the church ought to avoid when addressing a challenging pastoral situation by means of doctrine, then how could it proceed more fruitfully?

Though frustrating on one level, it is also liberating to recognize, as Father Rahner does, that “there is then no adequate formal theory of the development of [doctrine] which would be in itself sufficient to permit a prognosis for the future.” Reflecting upon doctrine in light of real pastoral problems is not like baking a cake with the aid of a detailed recipe.

Lacking such a formula, it is as absolutely vital that history, context and the real play a seminal role in such reflection. In Father Rahner’s words, “God’s revealing Word is directed through the medium of the historical process at the *total* history of humanity...” From there, the church continues to discern what the Spirit is saying:

The Church as a whole considers a thought which grows out of the whole content of its faith: it ripens, it merges ever more fully with the whole, while the Church lives it and perfects it. And so the Church of a certain day, if we may say so, finds itself simply there, believing in this special manner.

Perhaps Pope Francis himself best embodies this posture of active waiting. Lately, he has exhorted those around him to practice *parrhesia*—speaking boldly and frankly. This same *parrhesia*, and its underlying trust in the Spirit, ought to characterize the whole church, most especially when it engages the important work of reflecting upon difficult and multidimensional pastoral situations. And this challenges all of us to grow as people whose deepest desire is to be attentive to the Spirit. ■

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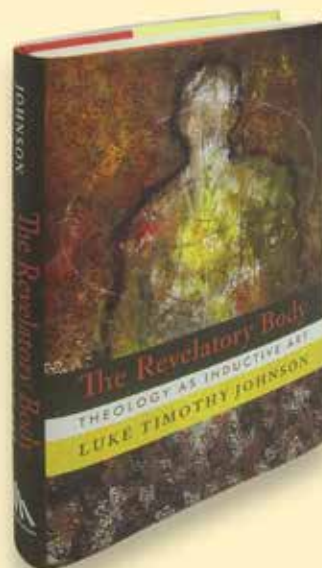
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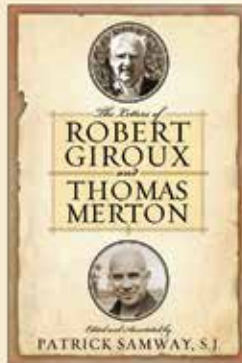
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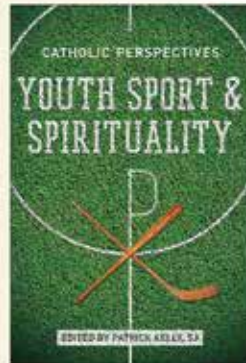


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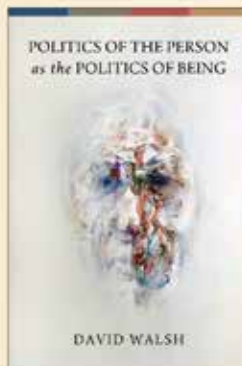
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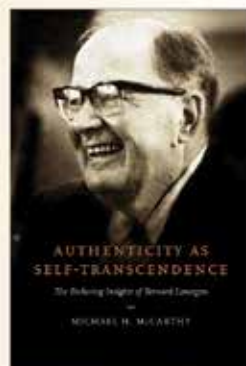
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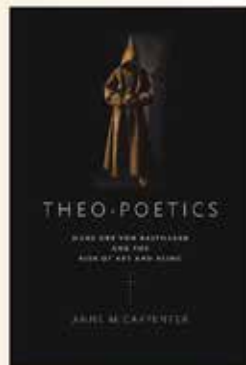
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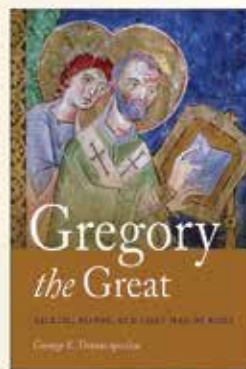
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The First Canon: Mercy

Pope Francis and the canon lawyers

BY KEVIN MCKENNA

Many canon lawyers may be in an ecclesiastical funk since the election of Pope Francis. Not one to “wield canons” at miscreants violating ecclesiastical norms, this pontiff seems more prone to mediation, conciliation and mercy, while upholding the important values of communion within the church. Although he has presented the traditional annual address to the Roman Rota with typical canonical observations and comments on the importance of the canonical tradition, especially in regard to matrimonial procedures, he has also subtly but pointedly directed the attention of canonists to a different perspective on the purpose of law within the church: a vehicle for mercy. “Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude, but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus. I encourage you to study how the various disciplines—the

dogmatic, morality, spirituality, law and so on—may reflect the centrality of mercy,” Pope Francis said in an address to the University of Argentina on the 100th anniversary of its founding. What is a canonist to do?

A Reorientation to the Purpose of the Law

The poet, author and physician Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. is reputed to have admonished his son, the famed jurist, before he began his legal studies: “If you can eat sawdust without butter, you will be a success in the law.” Perhaps Pope Francis can make even canon law more palatable, beginning with a reorientation to the purpose of the law as articulated by St. John Paul II and its application on the eve of the recently declared jubilee year devoted to mercy.

St. John Paul II, in his promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law in 1983, described “the great effort to translate... conciliar doctrine and ecclesiology into canonical language” (“*Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*”). The late pope was clear in describing the purpose of the law:

REV. KEVIN MCKENNA is the rector of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester, N.Y., and a former president of the Canon Law Society of America. He is also the author of a forthcoming book, *The Annulment: A Guide for RCIA Candidates, Ministers, and Others* (Paulist Press).



MARRIAGE COUNSELORS.
Bishop Dimitrios Salachas of Greece, left, talks with Msgr. Pio Vito Pinto, dean of the Roman Rota, a Vatican court.

The Code is in no way intended as a substitute for faith, grace, charisms and especially charity in the life of the Church and of the faithful. On the contrary, its purpose is rather to create such an order in the ecclesial society that, while assigning the primacy to love, grace and charisms, it at the same time renders their organic development easier in the life of both the ecclesial society and the individual persons who belong to it.

Law serves the church—not the other way around.

Pastoral Sensitivity to the Poor

The Code of Canon Law itself provides us with a starting point (and maybe even a blueprint) to examine ways in which the discipline of law can highlight opportunities to realize God’s mercy in practice. When considering the code, attention is often directed to the canons that state prohibitions, give directives or provide proper procedures. But the code also contains canons that are “exhortatory,” calling the members of the Christian faithful to the life of a good disciple. It could be useful in the upcoming Year of Mercy to examine some parts of the law that do not always receive attention. For example, the canons address a sensitivity to the needs of neighbor. The Christian faithful are bound to assist the poor from their own resources (c. 222, 2). A pas-

tor is to seek out the poor with particular diligence (c. 529, 1). Religious institutes are to provide for the support of the poor (c. 640). The poor are not to be deprived of fitting funerals (c. 1181). Richer dioceses are to assist the poorer ones (c. 1274, 3).

As St. John Paul II reminded the church so often, the church has a responsibility to be a strong defender of the human person, whose inviolable dignity is at the core of the protection of human rights, while at the same time promoting and protecting the common good. Safeguarding of the rights of the individual was a core working principle for the drafting of the revised code, and it is strong in defense of the dignity of the person:

Since they are called by baptism to lead a life in keeping with the teaching of the gospel, the Christian faithful have a right to a Christian education by which they are to be instructed properly to strive for the maturity of the human person and at the same time to know and live the mystery of salvation (c. 217).

Superiors of religious institutes are to act with reverence for the human person (c. 618). Those who proclaim the word of God are to teach the doctrine the church sets forth concerning the dignity and freedom of the human person (c. 768, 2). True education is to strive for the complete for-

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mation of the human person (c. 795). The church has the right to erect and direct universities, which contribute to the fuller development of the human person (c. 807). It is the responsibility of the church to proclaim its values and announce moral principles about the social order and the rights of the human person (c. 747, 2). A law that respects this fundamental principle—the dignity of the person—in its application can assist the entire church in the ministry of right order and organization, serving the common good and helping us walk together in mission.

Opportunities for Mercy

Ample norms are provided by the Code of Canon Law to direct the Christian faithful, including church officials, toward opportunities for extending God’s mercy. Pope Francis, in his recent decrees “The Gentle Judge, the Lord Jesus” and “The Meek and Merciful Jesus,” has streamlined the annulment process to make it less cumbersome and expensive. He has introduced some changes in the legal structures with the aim that “the heart of the faithful awaiting clarification [of their marital status] is not long oppressed by the darkness of doubt.”

With less of an emphasis on the technicalities of the law, perhaps more of an opportunity will be present for the tribunal official to relate to the pain and anguish present so often after a traumatic civil divorce procedure. Pastoral min-

isters who have worked in tribunals have come to see their work as channels of grace and healing to those who come wounded, in need of knowing God’s mercy and peace.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, in his recent work *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, pointedly inquires: “Mercy in Canon Law?” He responds affirmatively about the possibilities. While acknowledging the important role of the law in the Christian household and the existence of legal elements in the church from the very beginning, with the establishment of a clear rule for the exercise of authority, he also reminds his readers of the tradition of *epikeia*, a kind of mercy in the law that does not “dismiss justice; rather it is the higher righteousness.”

The canonical sense of justice is supposed to sweeten the harshness of the law’s justice with mercy. There is a general law, for example, against Catholics marrying non-Christians, but pastoral judgment often counsels that a dispensation be applied in order to offer a helpful solution in a particular case. Cardinal Kasper sees justice and mercy as authoritative for the practical application of church law. Only with both these elements present can fair and just solutions be achieved. And with this perspective, the final canon in the code (ca. 1752) can become the filter and lens by which its entirety is implemented in the spirit of Pope Francis: “The salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law in the church, is to be kept before one’s eyes.”

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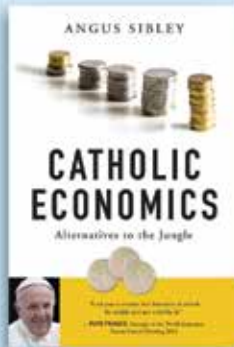
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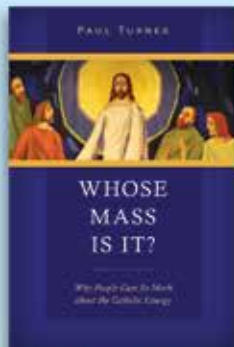
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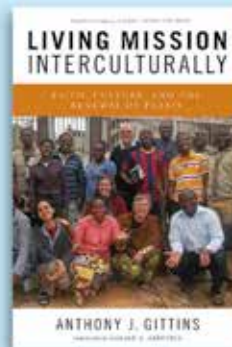


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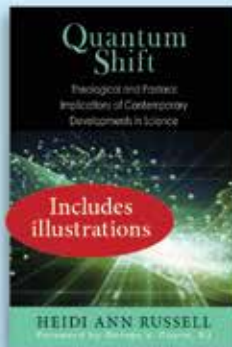
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‘Everyone’s Entitled To Dignity’

A conversation with Joseph R. Biden Jr.

BY MATT MALONE

Matt Malone, S.J.: It’s well known that at least two of your predecessors as vice president, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, were not big fans of the Jesuits. A mere 50 years ago, we had a debate in this country about whether a Catholic could be elected president, should be elected president. The United States established diplomatic relations with the Vatican only in the 1980s, and now this Jesuit pope is coming to address a joint session of Congress. What does that say about our country?



Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Matt Malone, S.J.

PHOTO: JEREMY ZIPPLE

Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.: I think it’s sort of the history of the journey of this country. If you think about it, it’s always been in the direction of inclusiveness, always been in the direction of acceptance, always been in the direction of expanding rights and recognizing differences. I think whether it’s the civil rights movement, whether it’s the attitude toward the Catholic Church, whether it’s the attitude toward minorities, it’s a constant progression. I think it’s what makes America the unique country in the world. It’s about policy. It’s about the whole idea that anything is possible, and it’s about progression. Maybe that sounds too nativist, but it really is who we are. In the not too distant future, Father, Caucasians of European descent are going to be an absolute minority in America. It’s a reflection of who we are. So it’s not at all surprising.

And that will change not only the face of the country, but also the church in this country.

It will change the face of the church. You and I both know that there are some real differences within the church in terms of tone and direction and just how far we should reach out. I got to meet this pope at his inauguration, where I had the great pleasure of representing the United States of America. My sister was with me and I sat at the altar; and afterwards, as you know, Father, you line up in alphabetical order in the basilica and the Holy Father stands at the foot of the altar, and he greets every head of state. The United States, we’re at the very end. So I walked up, and there was a wonderful Irish monsignor who had sat in with me in a long discussion I had with Pope Benedict just several months earlier. He turned [and introduced me to Pope Francis], and the pope reached out and he grabbed my hand and he said, “I know, Mr. Vice President, you’re always welcome here.” That is the message that he’s sending to the world.

And that is the tone that he’s striking everywhere, isn’t it?

Absolutely. That’s why he’s the singular most popular fig-

On Sept. 17, 2015, MATT MALONE, S.J., president and editor in chief of America Media, spoke with Vice President JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR. at the office of the vice president in Washington, D.C., about his faith, his family and his public life. A complete video recording can be found at americamagazine.org. The following text contains edited excerpts.

ure in the world today. And not just in Catholic nations, across the board. And you know it's because he's the embodiment of the Catholic social doctrine I was raised with. The idea that everyone is entitled to dignity, that the poor should be given special preference, that you have an obligation to reach out and be inclusive. I mean, look at the encyclical on climate change. It's all about, we have responsibilities, we have to husband this planet. I'm excited, quite frankly, as a practicing Catholic, I am really excited by [the fact that] the whole world is getting to see what are the basic essential elements of what constitutes Catholicism. We can argue about dogma, we can argue about some of the *de fide* doctrine that's been declared, but this is below it and above it. This is something much larger.

And he's going to address this joint session of Congress, the first time a pope has ever done so. It's going to be really interesting to watch.

I'll be sitting right behind him.

You're going to be sitting right behind him, and you and Speaker John Boehner, both faithful Catholics, have different political perspectives. Have you and Speaker Boehner talked about the optics of this? For example, are you going to stand, are you going to sit, are you going to clap?

Not in terms of the Holy Father. We've now done seven State of the Union addresses and we joke with each other, and John will say, "Don't stand on everything, will you please?" and I say, "Well I gotta stand on the parts I had something to do with in terms of arguing for them." John's a good guy, you know, I think we'll be sitting there with a great deal of pride.

And Pope Francis will have something to say, in that joint session, that will challenge and affirm everyone in that room.

I think what people confuse, Father—I've read a lot of what you've written; you don't [do this]—is the idea that fundamental religious convictions, in all the confessional faiths, not just Catholicism, are incapable of being separated from politics with a small "p," not a capital "P"; not Democrat-Republican, liberal-conservative. And it goes back to what I said about Catholic social doctrine. We say everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity. I don't know what the pope will say, but I would be surprised if he didn't enunciate the principles underlying all the major confessional faiths and particularly ours, and imply that there is a collective obligation to try to give meaning and life to those principles we all say we agree to.

And you mention the encyclical "Laudato Si," which had an enormous impact. Some folks in this country, some of the candidates for president, are saying the pope should stay out of politics.

He did stay out of politics. He made it clear, it is not the papacy's role to be the scientist in chief and/or the political arbiter. But what he talked about are basic fundamental assertions. Look, the way I read it, and I read it, is it was an invitation, almost a demand, that a dialogue begin internationally to deal with what is the single most consequential problem and issue facing humanity right now.

Even our Department of Defense has written long papers talking about what a danger to national security failing to deal with this is. Sea levels rise another foot, you've got tens of millions of people being displaced. You think there is a migration problem in Syria; watch what happens when hundreds of millions of people in South Asia are displaced and trying to find new territory to live. Look what's happened with Darfur. Darfur is all about climate change. It's about arable land being evaporated, figuratively and literally, and warring over land. So I think it's a total misrepresentation of the pope's encyclical to say it's a political document. It's a human document.

You read this encyclical both as a public servant and as a Catholic. I wonder over the course of your public life how you have navigated those different parts of yourself, the space between them?

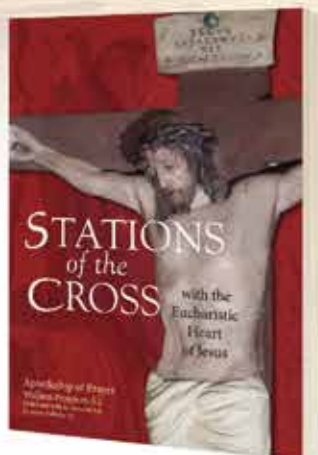
Well you know, before we sat down we were talking about a mutual friend, Fr. Leo O'Donovan, who I have a great admiration for. When he was president of Georgetown University, he asked me to address a retreat at Georgetown, and I said I'd be happy to. Then he gave me the topic. He said he'd like me to talk about how my faith has informed my public policy. And I had never talked about it those terms before. But I worked really hard on it. And when you actually put the words to paper, it forces you to really focus. And the way I was raised and the social doctrine and the religious theology I was taught were totally consistent.

It was summed up best as I thought about it: all the things that animated my passions were all about what my father would say. My father would say, "The cardinal sin of all sins, Joey, is the abuse of power." Whether it's a man raising a hand to a woman, whether it's economic power being invoked and asserted over someone else, whether it is the government abusing its power. And that's how I look at what this is all about, why my faith is so consistent with the public policy.

I think it's a total misrepresentation of the pope's encyclical to say it's a political document. It's a human document.

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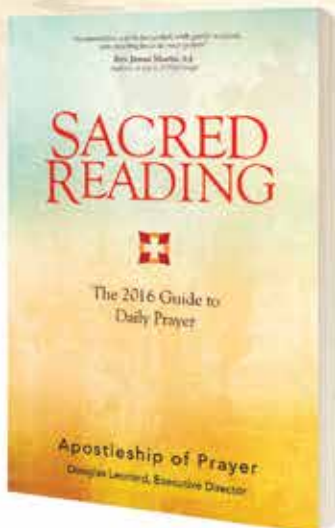


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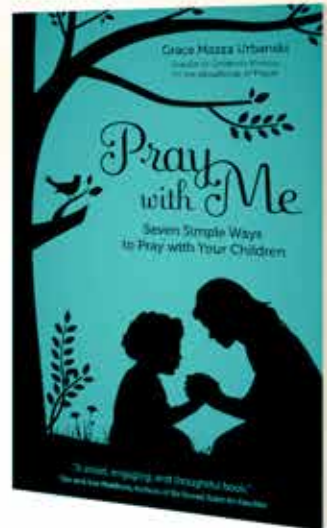


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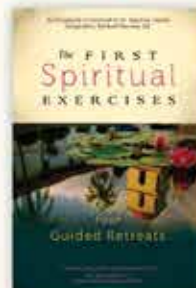
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I'm a practicing Catholic. I believe faith is a gift. And the first obligation we all have is, "Love your God," the second one is, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus Christ was sort of the human embodiment of what God wanted us to do, and everything Jesus did was consistent with what, generically, we were supposed to do. Treat people with dignity. Everyone's entitled to dignity, that's a basic tenet in my household.

But when you look at it, whether talking about the pope's encyclical, or the poor, or our obligations to others, it's all about fighting this notion of abusing power, no matter what form it is in, including the power of the church, or institutions. I am so excited about this pope, and it's not that I didn't have great respect and reverence for the last two popes. I got to meet them. I had four private meetings with Pope John Paul. But the thing that I think is so electric about the holy father is that he's taking it all back to what my dad would say: we have an obligation to fight against the abuse of power. I find that totally, thoroughly, consistent with everything that a Democrat or a Republican can try to implement in terms of policy. Now, we'll disagree on a policy basis how best to deal with that abuse where we think it exists, or if it exists, but I don't think there's any fundamental disagreement that we hold these truths self-evident, that all men are created equal. You can say it another way, the way the pope says it: every human being is entitled to be treated with dignity.

And yet there have been times, when talking about specific public policies, where you've had to take positions that were at odds with the bishops of this country on contentious questions like abortion. Has that been hard for you?

It has been. It has been hard, in one sense, because I'm prepared to accept *de fide* doctrine on a whole range of issues as a Catholic, even though, as you know, Aquinas argued about, in his *Summa Theologica*, about human life and being, when it occurs. I'm prepared to accept as a matter of faith, my wife and I, my family, the issue of abortion, but what I'm not prepared to do is to impose a precise view that is born out of my faith on other people who are equally God-fearing, equally as committed to life, equally as committed to the sanctity of life. I'm prepared to accept that at the moment of conception there's human life and being, but I'm not prepared to say that to other God-fearing, non-God-fearing people that have a different view.

Even—I don't want to start a theological discussion, I'll

get in trouble, it's above my pay grade, although it's my avocation, but there's, you know, there's even been disagreement in our church, not that—abortion is always wrong, but there's been debate, and so, there's, for me, at a point where the church makes a judgment, as we Catholics call, *de fide* doctrine, said, this is what our doctrine is. All the principles of my faith, I make no excuse for attempting to live up to—I don't all the time. But I'm not prepared to impose doctrine that I'm prepared to accept on the rest of—and I actually had that discussion with Pope Benedict. I had a wonderful meeting with him several months before he stepped down. It was like going back to theology class. And by the way, he wasn't judgmental. He was open. I came away enlivened from the discussion.

The Holy Father is taking it back to what my dad would say: We have an obligation to fight against the abuse of power.

Is there a place in the Democratic Party for people who are pro-life?

Absolutely. Absolutely, positively. And that's been my position for as long as I've been engaged.

I wonder if we could talk for a moment about how you've had to live a lot of your faith in public view. You've spoken about the role that loss and tragedy have played in your life, and I wonder if that has been difficult, too. There's a certain loneliness in every mourning, and you talk about how you feel comforted by your faith, by your family, by your friends. But it must be a very difficult thing to do that publicly.

Well, it's kind of a double-edged sword, Father. If you forgive me, I know you lost a brother. [Editor's Note: Father Malone's brother was killed in an automobile accident in 1984, a topic he wrote about in these pages, "The Father of Mercies," 3/7/2005].

I did.

I can't imagine your father, having been a first responder, responding to an accident to find out it's his own son that he's lost. So many people have gone through what your father went through. So many people have gone through so much more than I have without the support structure I have. And ironically, Father, the situation relating to the public side of this is, so many hundreds of thousands of people affirming the inspiration that my son provided is uplifting. And we've all decided, Father, that we don't want to talk so much anymore about—publicly or even privately—about the loss. Jill, Hunter, Ashley, my children, we all decided that we should focus on the inspiration he provided.

Regardless of what I do in public or private life, we are not going to walk away from the things that made Beau's life

beyond his family worthwhile. So we've set up a foundation. He felt so strongly about the abuse of children and women. We set up a foundation in his name, raising millions of dollars to help children in distress. He cared deeply about the notion that there was a need for the equal application of the law across the board.

So, no matter what we do, all of us, as a family, are going to stay engaged and work on those things that Beau inspired people to care about. And so doing that in public, quite frankly, is the best way to avoid what we all feel self-conscious about. We feel self-conscious about the focus on us. I don't want anybody feeling sorry for me or the families. Again, so many people have gone through so much more, with so much less support, yet they get up every morning, Father, and you saw it. They put one foot in front of the other and they move on.

My dad used to have an expression. Whenever you got knocked down, whether it was a football field, or you got turned down for the date, or you didn't win the prize or something bad happened to you, he'd say two things: "Joey, where's it written that life owes you a living?" And the next one was, "Just get up, pal. Get up." And that's what Beau wants us to do. That's what Beau expects his father to do. So we're just getting up and moving on. We're going to do good things in his name.

That's also a gift of our faith, as Catholic Christians. In the journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, you begin to experience the people that you've lost in your life, not just as an absence but also as a presence, right?

Yeah. I've said this before. My wife, Jill, when she wants to leave a message that she wants to sink in, she literally Scotch-tapes it on my mirror while I'm shaving. She taped a Kierkegaard quote, where he said, "Faith sees best in the dark." That's the gift of faith. That's the gift God gives you, that you're able to see best, faith works best, when you know the least, when you are most frightened, concerned, not sure of where to go. And I find it extremely reassuring.

I hope I don't sound like I'm proselytizing. Every major confession of faith has the same basic tenet. In our church, the way I was raised, you think of it in terms of the Holy Ghost. Now Holy Spirit, but we used to say Holy Ghost. That's the source of the faith. Christ dying on the cross was a heroic act; but the way my mom would translate it is that, "bravery lies in every man's heart and at some moment will be called upon." Can you step up for things that matter? Can you sacrifice for things that mean a great deal to you? The

way I was raised, the way priests had raised me, the nuns, my mother, my father, it was never in terms of heroic notions. It was just basic principles. Basic principles.

It wasn't about you give to the poor and you sell all your belongings and follow Jesus. It was just practical stuff, just practical things. Somebody needs help. My entire time that I lived with my parents, we had, with the exception of two years, a relative living full-time with us in a three-bedroom house. It was wonderful for kids; I don't know how my parents did it. I guess what I'm trying to say is that translating my faith was never discussed or viewed in dogmatic or heroic terms. It was just part of the experience. And that's why I get back, I end where I began. Catholic social doctrine. The bishops say it very well in seven points they lay out, but it just gets down to basic things. Dignity. The poor. Inclusiveness. You know, reaching out. It's not that complicated. It's hard; it's not that complicated.



Final question. Has anything changed in your thinking since your last public statements about whether you would seek the Democratic nomination?

No, Father. And you know, I know from experience, like you know from your experience, and millions of Americans know, it comes or it doesn't. I've just got to be certain that if I do this I'm able to look you in the eye and everyone else and say I'm giving it all my passion and all my energy and I will not be distracted. And secondly, equally as important, the other piece is this: Is this the best thing for the family as a unit? Every person who decides or considers running for president, Democrat, Republican, it doesn't matter, both sides of the aisle. Everybody thinks it's all about what do the numbers say. That's a calculation, whether you think it's possible.

But it all gets down to personal considerations. Because you have no right, as an individual, to decide to run. Your whole family is implicated; your whole family is engaged. And so for us, it's a family decision, and I just have to be comfortable that this'll be good for the family. In the past, all our political efforts have actually strengthened the family. A local Delaware magazine called Delaware in a Day, years ago, when Beau got elected, said "Family Business."

You know, it's not quite there yet. And it may not get there in time to make it feasible to be able to run and succeed, because there are certain windows that will close. But if that's it, that's it. But it's not like I can rush it. It either happens or it doesn't happen. I know that's not satisfying to anybody. But people who've been there, I know they understand. ■

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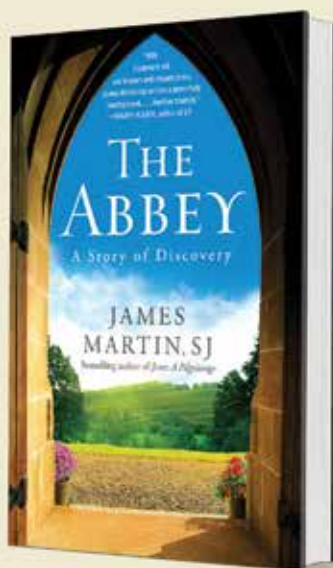
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A Writer's Dream

The story of a novel

BY JAMES MARTIN

For decades, I have admired Ron Hansen, the gifted author of many novels, including one of my favorites, *Mariette in Ecstasy*, about the religious experiences of a young nun in upstate New York. "Luminous" is how one reviewer described the book, and I think of that adjective every time I read it. More than 20 years ago, I met Ron when he came to lecture on theology and fiction at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass., where I was studying. Since then I have become friends with him, his wife and his family.

Yet, despite my many conversations with one of the country's great novelists, I was never able to figure out how someone could begin to write a novel. Does one sit down in front of an empty computer screen or hover over a blank sheet of paper and just make things up? I have written a few books, but they have been easier for me to envision. If you are writing about Jesus, for example, it seems logical to start with the Annunciation and work your way through his life, death and resurrection. But how does a person write fiction? The answer came, at least for me, while I was sleeping. One early morning last year, I sat bolt upright in bed after a vivid dream. It was by no means a nightmare.

In the dream, a middle-aged wom-

an was grieving the loss of her 13-year-old son in an accident. A few houses away from her lived a 30-something



handyman, who worked at a Trappist monastery. One afternoon, stranded at her office after her car broke down, she called the handyman to give her a lift home. En route, they stopped by the monastery. The woman's father had worked there many years ago. The two entered the monastery, and the woman sat in a hallway outside the chapel. As the monks chanted their prayers, the woman thought of her father and her dead son and started to weep. After Evening Prayer concluded, the abbot of the monastery saw the woman and asked if she was all right. This began a relationship in which the abbot helped her find God in the midst of her pain.

There it was, a fully formed story. Even the setting was clear. The street on which she and the handyman lived was the one on which I lived as a child

in suburban Philadelphia. The monastery was St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Mass., just outside of Worcester, which I had visited several times. Of course this didn't make sense, but dreams usually don't. Spencer is far from Philadelphia, so "stopping by" would be a day's drive.

Stranger still, the characters had names in the dream: the grieving mother was Anne; the handyman was Mark; and the abbot was called Paul. The monastery had a name: the Abbey of Saints Philip and James. And I was even given the opening scene: a baseball crashing through the window of the recreation room in Mark's house.

I forced myself to get out of bed at 4 a.m. and scribble this in a notebook before going back to sleep. When I awoke a few hours later and read my scrawl, I thought, "That's not a bad story." I wondered if Anne's journey and her conversations with the abbot might be helpful for readers. Maybe a short novel could, as St. Ignatius Loyola often said, "help souls." I knew I had to try to tell this story. But how?

Writing it Down

Despite my fears of making a fool of myself, I started to write. It was enormous fun. I love writing and would be happy to do nothing else all day. But it was a different kind of fun than the other kind of writing I have done, which has been mainly nonfiction, spiritual writing. Last year I finished a book on Jesus, which was extremely enjoyable

JAMES MARTIN, S.J., is editor at large of *America*. His novel, *The Abbey: A Story of Discovery*, will be published this month by HarperOne.

ART: JULIE LONNEMAN

to write—who wouldn't want to delve into the Gospels as deeply as possible?—but also a challenge. As soon as I settled on a particular interpretation of a Gospel passage or figured out what I felt was the best translation of a controverted Greek phrase, for example, I'd run across a scholar who suggested that that interpretation was outdated and my translation disputed.

No such problems with a novel! No Greek, no footnotes, no worries about which of the four sites that claim to be the site of Jesus' baptism is authentic. Of course the story still had to make sense. At one point I handed the novel to a fact-checker, a profession sadly on the wane. Fact-checkers, as you may know, are godsend for writers. In the case of my novel, she reminded me that one doesn't "dial" a cellphone; one punches in numbers. Also, one character couldn't have been emailing photos, she pointed out, since email didn't exist at the time the scene was set. She also made sure all the flowering trees I mentioned bloomed in the right order.

Overall, it was a freer process than writing nonfiction. Halfway through the writing, it felt like Anne needed a coworker in whom she could confide and share her concerns about spending

time at a monastery. So I gave her one. I named this character after someone at **America**. (You'll have to read the book to find out who.) That is not the sort of thing you can do in a book on Jesus. For example, one cannot suggest, "Gee, I think Jesus needs to have more apostles."


In the book, Anne speaks to Abbot Paul about her anger, pain and doubt. In writing about this, I felt free to build on my dream and flesh it out with new scenes and dialogue. Anne could give voice to the questions that many people struggle with: Why does God let bad things happen? How do I communicate with God? And how do I know when God is communicating with me? These questions form the basis for three extended conversations between Anne and the abbot, loosely based on many conversations I've had over the years with people who see me for spiritual direction. (Don't worry, there is no betrayal of confidentiality here: Everything is well disguised, and these are common questions.)

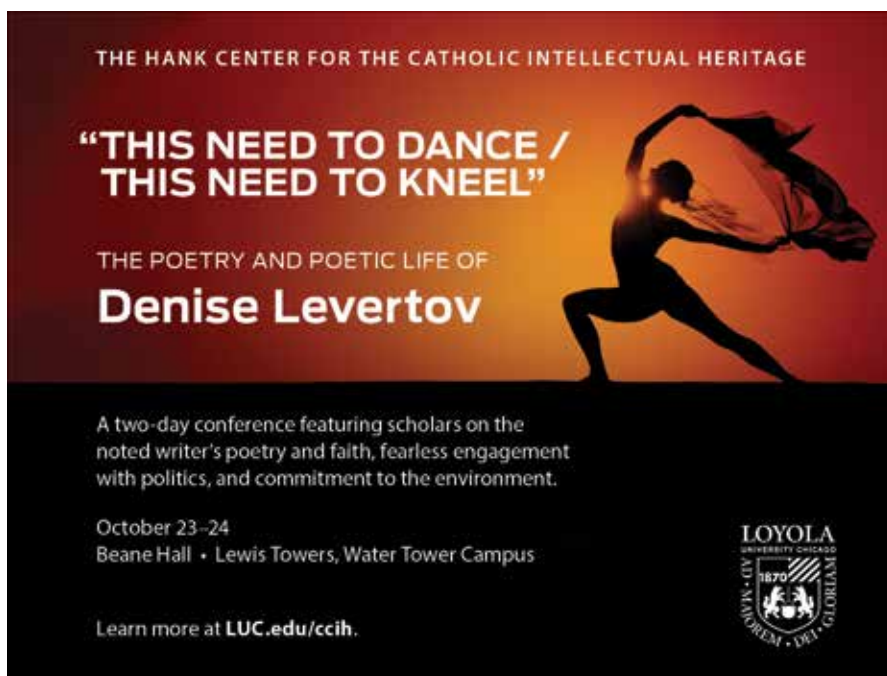
During the process of writing the novel, one strange and wonderful incident strengthened my desire to write and cemented a particular name in the book. When I awoke from my dream,

the name of the monastery confused me: the Abbey of Saints Philip and James. Now, I have no great devotion to either saint. But I figured if it came in a dream (and I ascribe some of this to grace) why not keep it?

A few months into my writing, I visited St. Joseph's Abbey. I was planning to be in western Massachusetts for a talk on a Sunday, so I took the opportunity to meet with a Trappist friend at the monastery on the Saturday before. But because of a busy day, I missed Mass that Saturday and wasn't even able to look at the daily readings. On Monday, back home in New York, I opened up my prayer book and wondered if there was a feast day on Saturday. So I flipped back a few pages. I couldn't believe it: the feast of Saints Philip and James. Whatever else changed in the book, that name, I decided, would stay.

The manuscript grew until it was "book size." In time, I sheepishly asked my publisher if they would want a novel. Yes, they said. Later on, I showed it to some writer friends (including Ron Hansen) who gave me superb advice. One suggested explaining exactly what goes on in Anne's prayer. Another friend, who studied creative writing, suggested a way to provide more vivid descriptions: pick out small details. For example, to give the reader a sense of the interior of the monastery, describe the look of the altar in the chapel, the appearance of an old table in a hallway and so on. I incorporated these edits and saw the manuscript improve. After the final edits, things got easier. My publisher and I picked out a cover and settled on a subtitle. (Should we use "Novel of the Spirit," "Story of Discovery" or "Tale of Encounter"?)

From start to finish, the process was fun. As for another novel? As far as I'm concerned, I'd be happy to write one, if I come up with another idea. Or rather, if God gives me one. Hey, a guy can always dream, right? 



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THE JESUITS

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By John W. O'Malley, S.J.
Rowman & Littlefield. 160p \$22

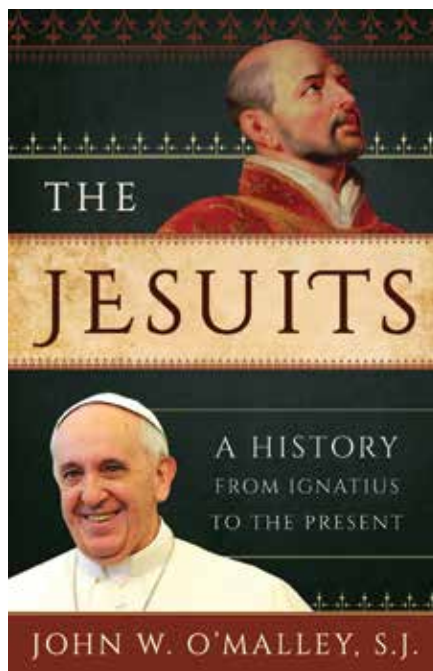
KEEPING COMPANY WITH SAINT IGNATIUS

Walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela

By Luke J. Larson
Paraclete Press. 196p \$19.99

The worldwide census of Jesuits reached 36,000, its historic peak, in 1965, we are reliably informed by John W. O'Malley, S.J., in *The Jesuits: A History From Ignatius to the Present*. That year was also my busiest year as an altar boy at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City, the magisterial Jesuit presence on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Often, two side altars were deployed along with the high altar so that three Masses could be said at the same time, keeping the queue of priests moving.

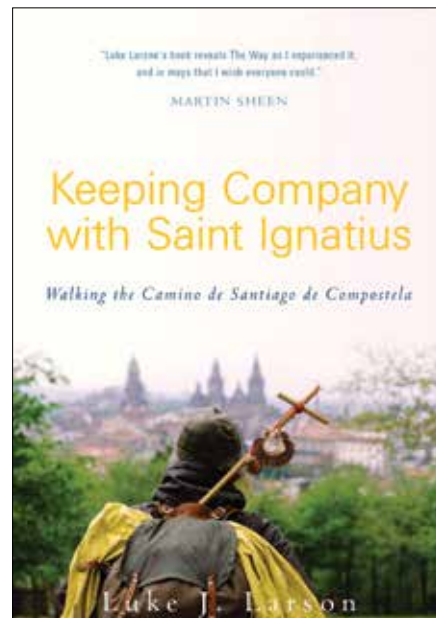
As an 8-year-old boy, kneeling on the Carrara marble steps awaiting my cues to ring the bells, I often gazed up at three murals in the apse. Each depicted a chapter in the story of St. Ignatius, the Basque founder of the Society of Jesus. Two were evocative enough, if a bit dull—Ignatius, with some of his early followers, kneeling before Pope Paul III to get permission to start the order; and Ignatius on the day of his canonization, lolling on a celestial cloud cushion in heaven. But I never tired of the drama in the first mural: it showed Ignatius, then a soldier known as Iñigo, his leg wounded by a cannon-



ball. As he is being bandaged on the ramparts of Pamplona, the invaders swarm a few feet beneath him. Even so, Iñigo is sitting up, giving orders to his men, his left hand pointing. It was during his long recuperation from this injury that he decided to abandon his life as a soldier and courtier and begin a quest for meaning. Hence the Jesuits.

Ignatius and the company of men he founded in 1540 loom over nearly five centuries of history, no less than they did over a small boy kneeling at a grand altar. Two recent books, O'Malley's and another by Luke J. Larson, capture parts of the Jesuit experience through different instruments: O'Malley by a telescope and Larson by microscope.

O'Malley, the leading academic historian of the order and a Jesuit, sprints through 500 years in 160 pages that do "little more than glide over the surface of a long and complex history," he says.



That is accurate but understates his accomplishment in *The Jesuits*.

Larson gives a personal account of a 500-mile pilgrimage across northern Spain that he made with his wife in *Keeping Company With Saint Ignatius: Walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela*. A former Jesuit seminarian, Larson has an engaging, down-to-earth voice that made it possible for me to read passages that might otherwise have been so intimate as to be inaccessible—like invitations to and from Ignatius, Jesus and Mary. I read him while preparing to make my third trip on the Camino and relished his descriptions of the serendipities and pleasures of fellowship on its many miles. They met complete strangers along the way who had already heard about him and his wife, Evie—"that couple from North Dakota"—through the pilgrim grapevine. Blister remedies were swapped with other travelers, as were tips on stuff to unpack, things to read and places to eat, sleep or see. They ran into a Canadian man at a village wine tap a week after seeing him

start on the journey with his daughter. Now he was traveling alone as she had gone on ahead with younger people. They prayed for father and daughter. Larson's keen eye for the sanctity of everyday life, his good humor and his ear for lore of the camino make *Keeping Company With Saint Ignatius* a consistently rewarding read.

For those who have merely heard of the Jesuits, and even for those who grew up among them, O'Malley, a Georgetown professor, proves to be a

winning, informed guide. He leads us through the order's shifting view of its missions and documents the resilience that has kept it relevant through generations of expulsion, suppression and rivalries. Considering that Ignatius' own correspondence runs to 12 volumes, O'Malley's conciseness is a blessing.

Two characters stand out. The first, of course, is Ignatius. Marooned and bored at his family's home in Loyola with his leg wrecked by the cannon-

ball, he discovered the only things to read were a life of Christ and a book about the saints. He found serenity in the examples of Saints Dominic and Francis of Assisi, whereas the thought of going back to the high life of a duke's court left him "dry and agitated in spirit." O'Malley writes, "This process of self-examination by which he arrived at his decision became a distinctive feature of the way he would continue to govern himself and became a paradigm of what he would teach others."

While staying at Manresa, a small Catalan town near Barcelona, Ignatius took up extreme versions of physical "austerities"—self-flagellation and prolonged fasting—that were seen as pathways to holiness. These rigors led him to suicidal thoughts. Easing up made him feel better, at peace. "A significant moment had been reached in the history of Catholic piety," O'Malley writes.

Instead of invoking monastic traditions of withdrawal from the world, Ignatius and the other early Jesuits placed high value on the richness of conversation, of art and reading and education. They would travel and preach. The world, after all, had been made by God; and, as Jerónimo Nadal, an early collaborator of Ignatius, said, "The world is our house." He might as well have also said it was their schoolhouse. A decade after the founding, Jesuits began to open schools and universities. Education remains the most vibrant thread in the order's DNA. Long after I served my last Mass, Ignatius leaned into my life through his progeny at a Jesuit high school and college. Jesuits and their lay colleagues taught me how to make a layup in basketball and critically read Walden Pond and how covalent bonds knit the physical world together.

Ignatius suffered his war injury about 80 years after Gutenberg built a printing press, so the Society of Jesus emerged as books were becoming part of everyday human life. Ignatius in-

As Eddie Fisher Catches Fire

—For Elizabeth Taylor

As Eddie Fisher catches fire, diamonds draw flame;
Scotch tumbles over rims like water in wells
Precious stones ring; like each pearl string, eight grooms hung bells.
Bows on blue-boxed Tiffany tongues thank your name;
Mere mortals, fans all, clamor and glamour becomes one same:
Celebrity, fashion, lights, Oscar, and Hollywood shame;
Self! I go my way! And the starlit starlet walks with fame,
Crying: Darling, what I do is for fans, for them I came.

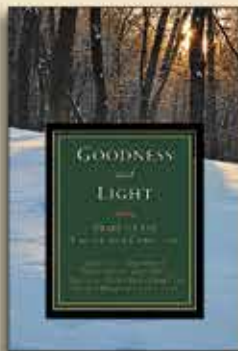
I say more: the splendid woman splendors;
Saves face: and faces all the make-up made;

Acts in the camera eye what in the camera eye she is—

Elizabeth. For Liz plays on ten thousand places
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not Eddie's
To the stars through smiles on all men's faces.

VINCENT GAITLEY

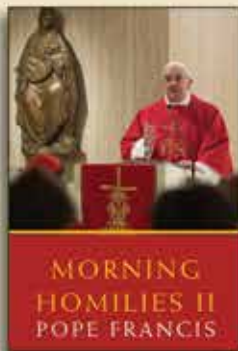
VINCENT GAITLEY holds two degrees from Saint Joseph's University. He retired as dean emeritus from Harcum College in 2009, and is currently president/C.E.O. of the Institute of Financial Operations, based in Orlando, Fla. He dedicates this poem to Joseph J. Feeney, S.J.



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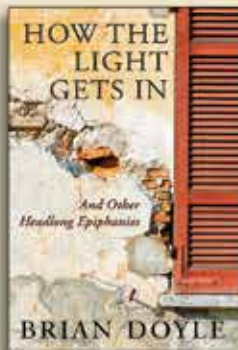
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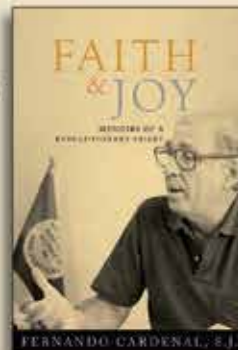
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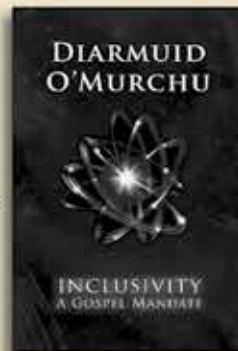
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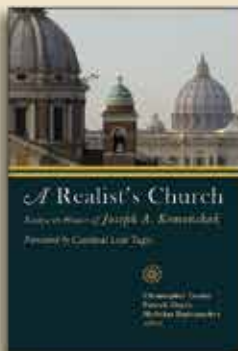
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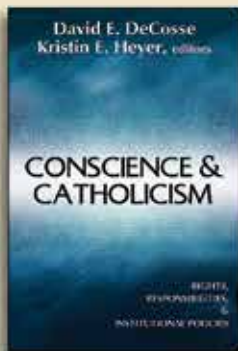
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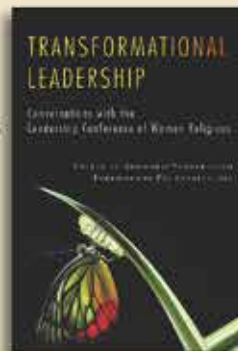
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stalled a printing press at the Roman College to keep textbooks affordable. The first book printed in India was a catechism by the missionary St. Francis Xavier. When 22 Jesuits sailed for China, they brought a library of 7,000 volumes. Just as young people born into a computerized world are called digital natives, the Jesuits were literacy natives.

The order's tradition of robust inquiry inevitably led to tensions with orthodoxy and power. O'Malley can barely catalogue all the expulsions and suppressions; his subjects are history's own scofflaws. Restored to papal favor in 1814 after a near-death suppression, the order sought security in alliance with the values of a fading ancien régime. "Although there were exceptions," O'Malley writes, "the Jesuits of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were inimical to the values of 'the modern world.'"

That had started to change by 1965, when Pedro Arrupe was elected superior general of the Society of Jesus. The Second Vatican Council was ending; Jesuits wanted to embrace other religious traditions and to act more forcefully against injustice. Arrupe supported these initiatives as members of the Society took to new ramparts with ingenuity and bravery, the elbow grease of moral purpose. They served refugees and displaced persons in 50 countries, urban students in the United States with the Cristo Rey schools, the poor in Central America and elsewhere with education and spiritual solace. "Between 1975 and 2006, forty-six Jesuits died violent deaths, most of which occurred because their efforts in trying to improve the situation brought them into conflict with vested interests," O'Malley writes.

In Arrupe's 16 years as leader, O'Malley says, he became "perhaps the most beloved and admired general of the Society with the exception of Ignatius." When he fell ill, the succes-

or he had designated was not permitted by Pope John Paul II to take office, a move that shook the Society. Though equilibrium returned, skirmishes continued in academic departments and publications over where the boundaries of legitimate inquiry and debate should be drawn. These, alas, are not aired at all by O'Malley, gaps I attribute to his estimable brevity.

Society membership is now less than half its peak of 50 years ago, a decline that would surprise no one today. But it surely would have startled the Jesuits who lined up to get an altar at St. Ignatius in 1965. And they would have been astounded that the cover of

a history of their order would feature pictures not only of Ignatius but also of Francis, the first Jesuit to serve as pope. His election surely prompted O'Malley and his publisher to rush out this fleet work, jammed with rewards—though with hardly anything about the new pope. Don't blame the author.

"The members of the Society were as utterly surprised by the choice as was everybody else," O'Malley writes, "and perhaps more so."

JIM DWYER, graduate of Loyola School and Fordham University, is a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist at *The New York Times* and the author of *More Awesome Than Money*.

WILLIAM BOLE

TRIBAL COMBAT

AN UNLIKELY UNION The Love-Hate Story of New York's Irish and Italians

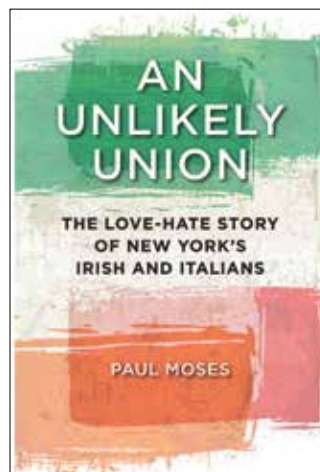
By Paul Moses
New York University Press. 368p \$35

Growing up in Brooklyn, I belonged to a predominantly Sicilian parish headed by a priest with silvery hair and wooly white eyebrows, whose surname was Riley. The pastor's homilies often involved itemizations of parish expenses, and some say that on one occasion he held up a few fronds of the kind distributed freely on Palm Sunday and declared, "Do you think these grow on trees?" When he was not preaching about money, the Irish priest was, far more subtly, admonishing the Italians.

At some Masses, he was able to point to (very few) empty pews. In doing so, the priest would allude vaguely

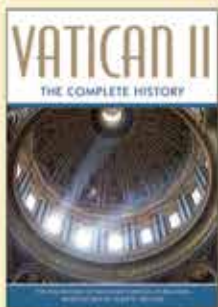
to the homebound piety of people like my first-generation Sicilian mother, suggesting some would rather stay home and supplicate in front of the saint prayer cards propped on their dressers. Or he might speak of others who had little esteem for the institutional church, in which case he could have been talking about my mildly anticlerical father, whose parents emigrated from Basilicata.

As a small child, I could hardly recognize the vestigial mistrust that surfaced in the pulpit of an aging (and dedicated) pastor in the late 1960s. That realization came many years later. But I did not realize how ferocious the battles once were between Father Riley's tribe and mine until I read Paul Moses' enlightening book about New York's Irish and Italians. I also hadn't appreciated the degree to which this history is also "a



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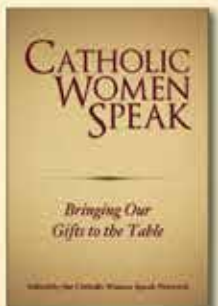


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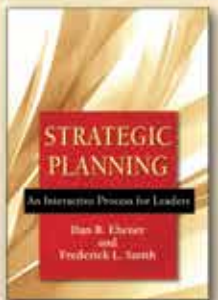


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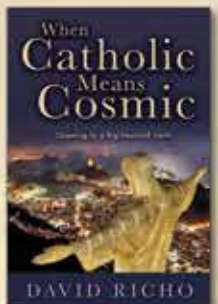


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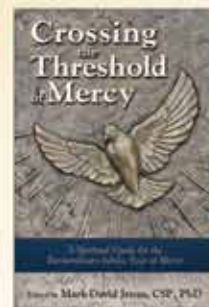


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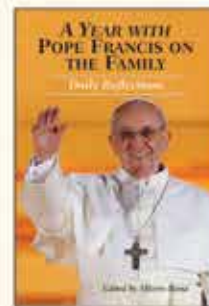


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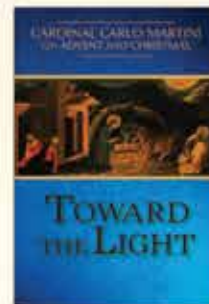
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story of how peace was made,” as Moses styles it.

In taking on this project, Moses had all the tools and inspiration he needed. He is a veteran journalist who spent many years at *Newsday*, where he won a Pulitzer Prize for spot news reporting in 1992. He is also a third-generation Italian American on his mother’s side (he’s Jewish on the paternal side), as well as a lifelong Brooklynite. And he has been married to an Irish Catholic woman for nearly four decades, part of a personal story woven into the larger tale.

Now a journalism professor at Brooklyn College, Moses brings to his subject not only a writer’s touch but also a scholar’s appetite for research. He reaches deeply into archival sources, including letters and news items that reveal how the Irish and Italians clashed in parishes, neighborhoods and workplaces.

As Moses points out, the Irish came first—in the 1840s and ’50s. “After

building their church, creating a school system, and seizing control of the city’s political machinery, the Irish were finally beginning to make it when the Italians arrived, willing to do their jobs for lower pay and longer hours,” the author writes. “Resentment and violence followed.”

The big waves of southern Italian immigration began in 1880, but Moses traces the animosity further back. In 1850, Italian nationalists, including the few New Yorkers among them, were aligned against the papacy in their struggle for Italy’s unification. Being faithful Catholics, New York’s Irish rallied behind the pope (an Italian opposed by most Italians). Rome fell to Italian insurgents on Sept. 20, 1870. And when Italians began pouring into New York with their anticlericalism intact, they celebrated that day each year. Irish Catholics looked upon the Sept. 20 festivities as “a sacrilege,” Moses notes.

Church leaders were no less appalled

by Italian celebrations of religious feast days. In loud and colorful processions, Italian men would shoulder statues of favorite saints, while “women and girls followed, raising candles aloft,” Moses relates. Many New Yorkers, not just the Irish, saw these parades of piety as more superstitious than religious. For a time, the processions were banned by the Archdiocese of New York.

Inside the churches, Italian worshippers were relegated to the basement. Writing to Archbishop Michael Corrigan in 1885, a prominent Irish pastor in Lower Manhattan explained: “Why only the basement? Forgive me, Excellency, if I tell you frankly that these poor devils are not very clean, so that the others do not want to have them in the upstairs church.”

Moses takes the story far beyond parishes. In workplaces, ranging from loading docks in Manhattan to trolley tracks in Brooklyn, the melees involving Irish and Italian laborers were so common that *The Brooklyn Eagle* ran an

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editorial in 1893 headlined, “Can’t They Be Separated?” The Italian rank and file rebelled against Irish union bosses, but around that time, it began to dawn on labor leaders that they needed to organize Italians rather than exclude them. For their part, church leaders decided to set up ethnic parishes for Italians, with pastors from their homeland.

A splendid array of characters passes through these fast-turning pages. They include saints—literally, in the case of Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, who stood up to New York’s archbishop in 1889 and was canonized a half-century later. And there are sinners, among them Al Capone, who murdered an Irish mob leader in Brooklyn and was an odd match for his loving Irish wife, Mae. (“She was tall, slim, pretty, quiet and blonde. He was stout and ill-tempered.”)

According to Moses, the worst of Irish-Italian bitterness had subsided by the mid-1930s. In the end, “peace was made” in no small part through strikingly high rates of intermarriage between the two groups after World War II. Moses digs into sociological research indicating that Catholic education,

which intermixed Irish and Italian kids, was a standout matchmaker in that regard (a finding I could happily vouch for as an Italian who met my Irish wife at Fordham University).

Did the Italians come to resemble the Irish in the way they look at the institutional church? Moses believes they did. By the late 1960s, “They’d been Hibernicized,” he contends. He cites one study from that time that found that third-generation Italian parishioners in New York were, unlike their grandparents, just as likely as the Irish to pray first and foremost to God rather than to a saintly intermediary. That’s undoubtedly one measure, but Moses doesn’t quite muster the evidence for his larger assertion that Italians had “adopted a much more Irish outlook on the church.”

In his conclusion, Moses explores the question of whether intermarriage, which united the Irish and Italians, might eventually do the same for black and white America. He is right to leave the reader with no clear answer.

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in God in modern society.

The fundamental thesis of this book is expressed thus by the author: “God persists and always will because it’s a fundamental characteristic of the connection between ourselves and the universe. That we’re connected to the universe is inevitable and indisputable, but until we had a scientific understanding of the universe, we could not imagine how. Now...we can break out of the old metaphors for God that have so cramped our thinking and expectations.” Unfortunately, this laudable thesis, although it speaks of “God,” is really addressing our image of God and is preceded by a declaration, repeated many times throughout the book, that the persistence in our need to image God is due neither to an independently existing God, creator of the universe that science seeks to understand, nor to our psychological need. So, while the “new atheists” are put down for the most part by the later denial, theists, with no reason offered that I can find in the book, are put down by the former, namely, the denial of an “independently existing God.”

So what is the “real” in the God that “could be”? We read: “This book is an exploration of what we choose to call real, because this choice is our opportunity. In a modern scientific understanding God can be real.” This means, it appears, that what is “real” is by our

choice and is limited to what science can tell us about the real. This is unfortunately the author’s self-description of the book, which is not true of the whole book, although it is a constant refrain. A better and more comprehensive description, again in the author’s own words, would be: “Our religions can be as important to us today as they have ever been to anyone

GEORGE V. COYNE

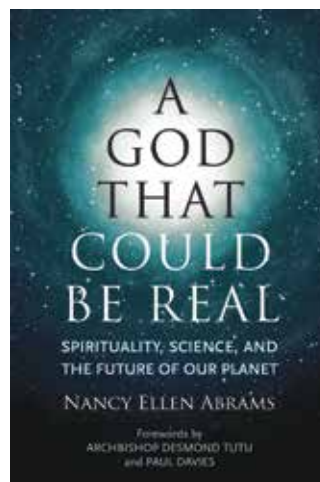
HELP MY BELIEF

A GOD THAT COULD BE REAL Spirituality, Science, and the Future of our Planet

By Nancy Ellen Abrams
Beacon Press. 200p \$25.95

For theists, those who believe that God not only exists—for the moment I am side stepping the word *real*, as in the book title—and created the world but is also active in the world, this treatment of a “real” God who is an emergent entity of the world will bring a challenging and enriching experience. For the “new atheists,” like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher

Hitchens and perhaps many others, it will bring a rude awakening as to how, without embracing theism, one can deal seriously with an alternative to the classical images of the God of religious faith. In brief, this book makes a serious and thought-provoking contribution to the interaction between our scientific knowledge and belief



in history but only if they support us in integrating our way of thinking about God into a positive, coherent, accurate worldview.”

This book makes a significant contribution to that integration. It could have done this without unreasonably denying the existence of a God creator, whose image is wonderfully presented by the author in terms of our modern scientific understanding of the universe. Denying or asserting the existence of that which one is imaging is not relevant to the “reality” of the image, in the author’s sense of real. The image of God that emerges from the analysis in this book of our modern scientific knowledge of a dynamic universe is marvelous and makes a serious contribution to the growing amount of literature on analogical knowledge of God, mostly by theists. The uniqueness of this contribution is that it comes from a “non-theist.” I hesitate to use the word *atheist* for the author of this contribution.

Emergence, as a scientific phenomenon, is the key to understanding the dynamic universe we live in and, in fact, out of which we too emerged. The author presents a convincing discussion that our image of God is enriched by such an understanding of the universe. In fact, we have emerged in this dynamic universe as aspiring human beings, and we are endowed with “God aspirations,” to use the author’s phrase. The “real” God of those aspirations is the result of our modern scientific knowledge. There is no doubt that theists do well to take seriously such analyses.

However, to be honest to a genuine theistic image of God one must realize that in the Jewish-Christian tradition God is primarily a source of love and not of explanation. Faith is a gift of God’s love, totally gratuitous, not earned and not the result of reasoning. But such a great gift is nourished, and not just cherished, when one struggles to accept that precious gift as coherent with all of our human experiences.

Today our scientific knowledge of the universe must be accepted as one of the most significant of those experiences. This book, I think, when read critically can be a very fruitful help toward accomplishing that coherence.

We all walk our own walks at our own pace. Nancy Abrams has shared her personal pilgrimage especially in the Introduction and has chosen a wider path to which her trek has led her and which she has eloquently de-

scribed. Each of us, theist and non-theist alike, would profit immensely by joining her in that pilgrimage, while still walking our own walk at our own pace.

GEORGE V. COYNE, S.J. is an astrophysicist and former director of the Vatican Observatory. He now holds the McDevitt Chair in Physics at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y., where he teaches courses in science and religion. He is co-author of *Wayfarers in the Cosmos: The Human Quest for Meaning*, G. V. Coyne and A. Omizzolo.

CHRIS HERLINGER

WAR WITHOUT END?

REDEPLOYMENT

By Phil Klay
Penguin. 304p \$16

GREEN ON BLUE

By Elliot Ackerman
Scribner. 256p \$25

THE CORPSE EXHIBITION And Other Stories of Iraq

By Hassan Blasim
Penguin. 208p \$15

War is something nearly all people want to avoid. Yet war’s extremes of experience make literature about war so compelling, commanding and fascinating.

What readers find if they pursue this rich genre is the surprising variety. As one recent undergraduate syllabus put it, the adjectives associated with war literature are varied: “the epic, heroic, realistic, naturalistic, dramatic, satirical, absurd, and poetic or lyric.” Put another way, there are as many different types of war literature as there are experiences about war.

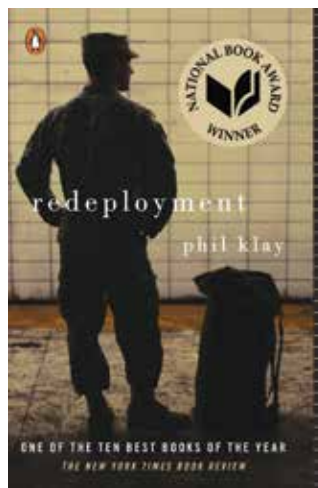
This is becoming clear in the litera-

ture of the post-9/11 wars, which have already produced some fine and varied works from a number of perspectives. Phil Klay’s *Redeployment*, a memorable collection of short stories, has been among the most acclaimed. It has garnered Klay—a Dartmouth graduate and former U.S. Marine who served in Iraq—the National Book Award and a spot on the New York Times bestseller list.

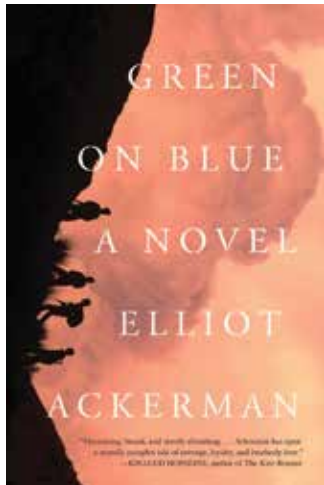
Redeployment also continues the well-worn tradition of examining war’s absurdities and ironies—a tradition that took off during World War I, and has continued with writers as diverse as

Jaroslav Hasek, Joseph Heller and Tim O’Brien. Klay’s depiction of what happens to bodies in Iraq’s unforgiving climate—“(1)eave a body in the sun, the outer layer of skin detaches from the lower, and you feel it slide around in your hands”—evokes the same kind of artful and ironic description of horror that undergirded the work of the memoirists and poets who fought in the trenches of World War I.

Also sharp here are the bureaucratic



depictions, something Heller parodied so well in *Catch 22*. Klay continues this tradition memorably in his depiction of a Foreign Service officer whose humanitarian assignment is to teach a group of Iraqi children the fine points of American baseball. Part of the officer's unenviable task is, naturally, to record his "success" by taking photographs for the home office. Anyone who has had a similar assignment to depict "good news" of the humanitarian sort will recognize the absurdity: the kid at bat "swung as though he were using the bat to beat someone to death, lifting it overhead and bringing it brutally down."



What one remembers about Klay's work, though, is the poignant description of the strange dislocations soldiers face in returning to a country that pays lip service, but little else, to their service and sacrifice. At their best, these stories merit comparisons to the work of Ernest Hemingway, who explored similar themes. In *Redeployment's* title story, an Iraq war veteran whose experiences in war included shooting dogs that feasted on human flesh finds himself back in suburbia pondering an unexpected and unwelcome decision about a house pet.

A veteran enrolled at a prestigious law school finds himself playing the role of "the Marine" among fellow students he neither likes nor respects: "Some of them, highly educated kids at a top five law school, didn't even know what the Marines Corps did. ('It's like a stronger Army, right?')" And the soldier who pulled mortuary duty finds himself playing a similar role when he recounts his gruesome experiences to those he meets. "There are two ways to tell the story," he says. "Funny or sad. Guys like it funny, with lots of gore and a grin on

your face when you get to the end. Girls like it sad, with a thousand-yard stare out to the distance as you gaze upon the horrors of war they can't quite see."

If Klay's work represents the latest version of the absurd and satirical (though with realism aplenty), Elliot Ackerman's *Green on Blue* might be an example of realistic, naturalist and dramatic. But there is a key distinction. Ackerman, who served tours of duty in both Iraq and Afghanistan, has chosen not to chronicle war through American eyes but rather through a first-person narrative of a young Afghan named Aziz who finds himself suddenly thrown into war. The result is an un-

commonly fine novel, one Americans need to read—and heed. (The title refers to the military term for Afghan violence against American forces.)

The decision to tell a story through an Afghan lens is, of course, potentially problematic. In his New York Times review of the novel, Tom Bissell rightly focused on those likely to criticize an American author—and a former soldier, at that—for committing "an act of cultural appropriation."

Bissell said these critics are guilty of embracing "the revenge of the intellect upon the imagination—the perfect lens for someone who knows everything about art except what it's for." Yet, as Bissell rightly points out, nearly "every artist interested in what's beyond our 'tiny skull-sized kingdoms' (to use David Foster Wallace's phrase) is guilty of appropriation. Would that

it happened more often; if Ackerman's novel is any indication, there would be fewer wars if it did."

To that, I say "bravo" to appropriation. But let's view it even more broadly. Not to take away anything from Phil Klay's accomplishment in depicting the American experience in a far-away war, but Americans would be greatly served if we had greater access to more fiction, memoirs and poetry from those who have experienced the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan from "the other side."

One book that is worthy of such attention is Hassan Blasim's *The Corpse Exhibition and Other Stories of Iraq*, a collection of short stories and vignettes that, luckily, has been translated from Arabic into English. Blasim's vision is unremittingly dark and pessimistic. His narratives are crafted by an Iraqi writer and war refugee who has obviously read his Kafka and Borge. Blasim now lives in Finland.

Blasim's is an important voice that reveals to Western readers how war can cripple and crush an entire society not only physically but spiritually: "The wars and the violence were like a photocopier churning out copies, and we



all wore the same face, a face shaped by pain and torment. We fought for every morsel we ate, weighed down by the sadness and the fears generated by the unknown and the known," laments the narrator of one story.

Still, Blasim's work is something of an anomaly. Given the realities of the publishing world in the United States, we are not likely to get more works like these in great numbers, which is why Ackerman's novel is so welcome.

Green on Blue strongly suggests that, in many ways, the war in Afghanistan is not and never was an American war.

In a telling example, the sole American in *Green on Blue* is a shadowy figure named Mr. Jack, whom Aziz judges harshly from the beginning: "He had a great affection for the American West," Aziz says of Mr. Jack. "He thought we Afghans did not understand what it meant to be named after the Indians of his country, but we understood. To us, it seemed a small but misguided sort of insult. For our tribes had never been conquered."

A brutally salient point. Afghanistan has entangled Americans, surely. But the war there has never been fully defined by Americans. The U.S. entry in Afghanistan in late 2001 came as unresolved conflicts between different factions—and not just the Taliban and its opponents—still plagued and troubled Afghanistan. The result? In the 14 years since, faction has played off faction, clan has played off clan. In Vietnam, the United States recognized an enemy. In Afghanistan, all is murky. U.S.-backed warlords and tribal leaders have masterfully played the United States for their own purposes.

Aziz's troubled experience mirrors this murkiness. As a way to support a brother crippled in a terrorist bombing, Aziz is drafted into a U.S.-funded militia. The young man is trapped by circumstances. Aziz's own allegiances and loyalties begin to shift—out of loyalty to his brother, mainly, but also by a growing and chilling realization that there are those in the world who profit from war, permanent war. "War only ends for those who allow others to fight for them, but there is always fighting," Aziz's commander reminds his charge.

Aziz himself comes to recognize that "this war's true nature [was] that it had no sides. Each was the same as another." In contrast, a veteran of the mujahid battle against the Soviet Union recalls he and others were fighting for better times for all. "Now the cause is war for advantage, war for profit, not a future." The book's shattering climax confirms this sad truism.

Green on Blue has a few imperfections. Sometimes the narrative becomes too clotted and thick, and a romantic sub-plot sometimes distracts. Still, it is a beautifully and sensitively written book—a courageous, empathetic and much-needed piece of work

DAVID O'BRIEN

TESTING THE TRUTHS

THE COUP AT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

The 1968 Revolution in American Catholic Education

By Peter M. Mitchell
Ignatius Press. 320p \$19.95

The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) caught American Catholics, and American bishops, by surprise. In the United States the Catholic Church expanded dramatically in the years after World War II. The number of Catholics almost doubled, and for the first time bishops and religious orders had the human and financial resources to meet their needs. Building, fund-raising and providing basic pastoral care took up almost all the energy of the bishops. Few anticipated the changes and challenges that the council inspired. Addressing those changes during and after the council was complicated by unprecedented conflicts in the country. It was "the Sixties." Much did change; whether those changes were due to the Vatican II, to developments within the American Catholic community or to the pressures of "secular" society was and remains an unsettled question.

By the time of Pope John Paul II, in the process of reform and renewal deep divisions had opened within the American church. Now, a half century after the council, we have in *The Coup at Catholic University* an honest expression of those differences.

for a public that has not often enough appreciated the human toll exacted in these confounding recent wars.

CHRIS HERLINGER, a contributing writer to *The National Catholic Reporter* and its *Global Sisters Report*, writes frequently about international and humanitarian issues.

The Rev. Peter M. Mitchell describes himself as a John Paul II Catholic, part of a generation inspired by the pope's call for a more assertive, evangelical faith. As he sees it, the previous Vatican II generation tried hard to adapt Catholic faith and practice to American conditions, in the process undermining authority and placing Catholic identity, even integrity, at risk. His generation, committed to affirming a distinctively Catholic faith, is recovering the American church's identity. Father Mitchell hopes that by helping American Catholics understand the Vatican II generation, he can contribute to overcoming those divisions.

The Coup at Catholic University is a well-researched and carefully told story of how the U.S. bishops, who controlled The Catholic University of America, dealt with the case of the Rev. Charles Curran, the moral theologian, in 1967–68. At first they decided not to renew Curran's contract, ending his career at the university. In the past this would have been the end of the story, but this time the faculty, who had endorsed Curran's candidacy for renewal and tenure, refused to accept that decision. They were joined by many students, including priests who were graduate students, in a strike and well publicized demonstrations. The university chancellor, Bishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington, and the board backed down, handing victory to Curran and the faculty.

A year later Pope Paul VI published

the encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*,” which renewed the church’s condemnation of artificial birth control. Curran led a large group of theologians, many from Catholic University, who expressed their public disagreement with the encyclical. Individual bishops sidelined some dissenters; but, once again, the university, in the name of academic freedom, did not penalize faculty members who had expressed their opposition. As Mitchell and others see it, this was a critical turning point in U.S. Catholic history.

Peter Mitchell tells the story well within the larger historical framework he sets at the start. For him Curran and his supporters wanted the “absolute” autonomy of the university based “entirely on academic freedom.” By backing down, the church’s bishops lost control of Catholic higher education and Catholic theology, at great cost to the church. He interviewed the living veterans of the struggle, including Father Curran, and he treats the dissenters and demonstrators with respect. But he adds drama to the story by resurrecting the memory of the Rev. Eugene Kevane, dean of the School of Education, who resisted the pro-Curran march of the faculty and whose correspondence with key bishops demonstrated, to Mitchell’s satisfaction, his keen insight into what was at stake in the crisis. If Curran won out, Kevane wrote, “the seeds of religious doubt, doctrinal confusion, and outright crisis in Faith will be sown over the entire United States through the very schools and colleges operated by and in the name of the Church.” He was right, Mitchell thinks, but Kevane was not reappointed, after another fight, and left the university. He seems like the victim of the Vatican II “coup,” as Curran, fired again years later, might be seen by some as the eventual victim of John Paul’s counterrevolution.

But the book is limited to the 1967-1968 disputes. Three points deserve attention. First, Mitchell never explains that Catholic University was unique in

its pontifical status and governance by the U.S. hierarchy. A few other colleges were established under diocesan authority, but the vast majority of colleges and universities were established, and before 1968 governed, by religious orders. Bishops rarely contributed funds and almost never interfered with academic governance. One bishop complained that he felt “like a potted plant at graduation.” The introduction of theology into the curriculum and the development of conflicts among theologians was a post-Vatican II phenomenon that set the stage for the long conflict between the universities and Rome. Aside from Catholic University and its pontifical faculties, it was rarely for the Vatican a question of who controls the university, but of who controls theology. That fight is still going on.

Second, Mitchell tries to be fair to the Vatican II bishops and dissenters, but he follows the narrative that sees their actions as dictated by a desire to win acceptance and prestige in secular academic life. That is clearly inadequate, as the work of the historian Alice Gallin, O.S.U., makes clear (her two books and one collection of documents on post-Vatican II Catholic higher education are not referred to here). The architects of university autonomy had a vision of shared public responsibility, working at the center, not the edge, of modern and American culture. They hoped that Catholics could engage, enrich and in some cases—like race, economic justice and war—transform society. Most of all they hoped they could nourish the creative intelligence and imagination of American Catholics. Mitchell’s adaptation-to-secular-society framework trivializes the stakes and mischaracter-

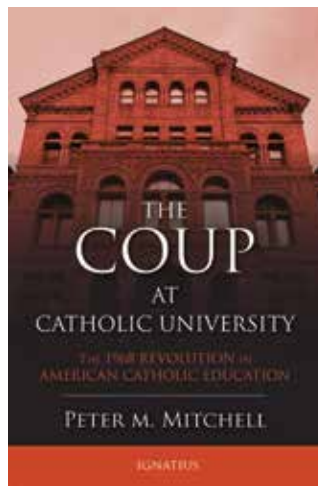
izes half the players.

Third and most important, Mitchell simply bypasses the challenges posed by Vatican II, especially the challenge posed by the idea that truth could be found outside as well as inside the church and the subcultures it created. For Curran truths of faith had to be related to truths of human experience, especially in human sexuality. For many faculty members, the faith had to be tested by standards of truthfulness in science and in the give and take of intellectual and religious pluralism. Mitchell admits that the “dissenters” never challenged the ministry of bishops and pope to protect the central truths of the tradition, but he fails to acknowledge their confidence that even the most basic Christian truths could be better

known when placed in dialogue with others. The “Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World” seemed to affirm that idea. The actions of the Vatican and the hierarchy, beginning with the Curran affair, often seemed to contradict it. So the stakes were indeed high, and people on both sides knew it.

History provides memory for communities and institutions, sometimes shared memories that give meaning to the common life. But often there are sharp contests over the content and interpretation of memory. Father Mitchell clearly loves the church and hopes to reconcile contending parties, but his book, perhaps like this review, stands within and not above the battleground. More than this “coup” story will be needed to draw our Catholic generations together.

DAVID O'BRIEN is emeritus professor of history at *The College of the Holy Cross*.



WHERE WERE YOU?

Not when J.F.K. was shot.
Not when the Twin Towers fell.

But on March 13, 2013, when Francis was elected pope.

I was in the hospital. Suffering from a malady the ER doctors could not name, I was admitted for tests and observation. I had never spent time in a hospital before, at least not as a sick person. After the routine delivery of each of my three healthy babies, I had been released within 24 hours, for which I was grateful. Hospitals have always been places associated with disaster. My father died in one at age 42 when I was 8 years old, and my eldest brother nearly died in one at age 16 the following year. According to our family narrative, we got him out in time.

Looking out my window at the mid-March weather, I felt as low as the gray clouds hanging on the horizon. Spending just a few days in the hospital had dampened my usually genial spirits and killed my confidence. Instead of my own clothes, I was wearing a hospital-issue gown—the same kind every other patient was wearing, with its signature undignified opening in the back. The nurses who came in to dispense medicines identified me by a number (my D.O.B.) rather than my name. It seemed that the culture of the hospital, in collusion with my illness, was slowly robbing me of my identity.

My cellphone became my lifeline, my means of connection to family, friends and colleagues, to the events going on in the great world and, most important, to the self I was beyond those imprisoning walls. One powerful source of that identity is the fact that I am Catholic; and like other Catholics all over the

world that March, I was eagerly waiting to see who would be the new pope.

My hospital roommate was waiting, too—Elena, a 90-year-old Jewish woman with a playful sense of humor and a mind sharp as the No. 2 pencil she used to do the New York Times crossword puzzle each morning. When the orderly came to take her for X-rays one day, she asked if she ought to bring anything with her. “Nope,” replied the reticent young man. “Just my body?” Elena exclaimed with a flourish, extending her arms to present herself in all her human glory. Even he smiled. An attorney who still kept her Manhattan practice, Elena was delighted to find herself rooming with a Roman Catholic. The world was waiting for the new pope, and she had so many questions.

The lab technician who came to collect blood each day was also glad to discover that I was Catholic. Jamaican by birth, Vera would snap on the light at 5 a.m. each morning to wake me, sing-singing her daily mantra, “I may be a vampire, but I don’t work in the dark.” Vera was waiting, too. As was the young Indian nurse and the Latina eucharistic minister who came by to dispense Communion.

Thanks to these women and their curiosity, our sickroom became a hotbed of papal conversation. Talk of medical maladies was set aside for church vocabulary—*conclave*, *College of Cardinals* and, inevitably, *infallibility*. Bed-bound in my hospital gown, I.V. tubes trailing from my arms, I was the

least likely evangelist, teaching people what I knew about the church and relying on the miracle of Google for what I didn’t. These were my companions on March 13 at 1:30 p.m. when I first got wind of the white smoke. As I held up my iPhone, we thrilled to the roar of the crowd standing vigil in rainy St. Peter’s Square, to the bells ecstatically ringing out the news.

Moments later, my Facebook page erupted with excitement, all 692 of my “friends” (many of them nerdy Catholics like myself) simultaneously sharing the good news. As “Habemus papam” echoed through cyberspace, a friend living in Rome posted photos of the celebrations breaking out all over her city. So many people, separated by geography, divided by time zones, differentiated by race, ethnicity and

faith traditions—all were in the room with us celebrating. And so that dreaded place, the hospital, held the world for a moment. Transformed from a site of catastrophe into a one of joy, it became a place to ponder possibility.

Mere moments after his election, Pope Francis was already the agent of change—and has been ever since. Two and a half years later, on the heels of his historic visit to North America, this pope who brought the saints and the poor into the papacy still thrills and surprises us, still fills us with hope—as he did the first moment he entered our lives. March 13, 2013, a day when hope triumphed rather than tragedy, remains a day to remember. You know where I was. Where were you?

That dreaded
place,
the hospital,
held the
world for a
moment.



ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL is a writer, professor and associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham University in New York.

AT TABLE. Pope Francis celebrates Mass in Nu Guazu Park in Asuncion, Paraguay, July 12.



ART | LORENA O'NEIL

FRUITS OF THE EARTH

Koki Ruiz and an altar of corn for the pope

When Pope Francis presided at Mass at Nu Guazu Park in Paraguay in July, he stood in front of a 72-foot-tall, 131-foot-wide corn altar. To create the unique altarpiece, the Paraguayan artist Koki Ruiz used 32,000 corn cobs, 200,000 baby coconuts, 1,000 squashes, 771 pounds of seeds and grains—and an overwhelming dose of faith.

“Making it with the fruits of our earth is a symbol meant to make people reflect and think of our earth and the importance of nature,” says Ruiz in an interview conducted in Spanish. “It renews the value the [indigenous] Guaraní people gave to the fruits of the earth.”

Ruiz, 58, is a renowned artist in Paraguay known for his picturesque, rural oil paintings and his performance-based art event held annually on Good Friday.

For Ruiz, every element of the Baroque-inspired altar has a pur-

poseful link to nature and the environment, which coincides with Pope Francis’ recent encyclical. Ruiz used corn as the main material because, he said, the indigenous Guaraní people of Paraguay placed great value on it. “They would plant a seed, then the

earth would give them millions of grains,” says Ruiz. “In European culture they used gold to gild an altar. For the Guaranís, the most precious and valued thing was the fruits of the earth, so we gilded this altar with corn, replacing gold in its color and shine.”

Ruiz and his team did not use any paint on the entire altar. Colorful seeds and grains were used to create the portraits of St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis of Assisi, measuring 8 feet by 13 feet. The image of St. Ignatius was chosen as a way to honor the Jesuit missionaries who converted the Guaraní people, and St. Francis was chosen because of his love of nature and animals, and because it is the pope’s chosen name.

“In order for the altar to represent Paraguay, everybody had to like it and understand it,” says Ruiz. He worked with a team of 20 workers on the altarpiece, but had hundreds of volunteers who donated fruit and labor. Ruiz rarely, if ever, uses a first-person pronoun when discussing the work; he takes pride in how many people participated in its execution.

“We opened up our workshop so the people could look at the altar and touch it,” says Ruiz. People traveled



Koki Ruiz and his work

TOP: CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARRING. RIGHT: PHOTO BY JOEL OVIEDO

from all around the country to come and inscribe their names, messages and prayers on the small green coconuts.

Making art and faith accessible to the masses is a crucial part of Ruiz's work. He started combining the two in 1992 with his Good Friday event.

"I wanted to make art with the people in my town," says Ruiz. "I noticed that the way most people here communicate with each other is through shared religious experiences." He refers to this as "popular religiosity" and says it "fascinated" him to see how everyone connected with each other in their faith. He said that in the 1990s the people in his hometown of San Ignacio felt the Catholic Church alienated the cultural aspects of celebrating their faith and focused solely on theology and reading the Bible.

"I thought that the people needed to express themselves and to feel, and the best way to do that is through their religion," says Ruiz.

In 1992 he joined his friends and family to walk in a candle-light procession of the Stations of the Cross, chanting age-old Guaraní hymns along the way. Today his Good Friday celebration draws 15,000 to 20,000 visitors, no small feat for a country of six million people and for an event held four hours outside the capital city.

Dubbed Tañarandy after Ruiz's

neighborhood, the participatory event has evolved over the years. Thousands of people gather to line the red dirt road with candles—one per person—made of carved-out orange halves, lighting the way for the two-mile procession.

From 2004 to 2014 Ruiz featured *cuadros vivientes*, or living paintings, with performers dressed up and recreating famous religious paintings, at the end of the procession. Every year an exhibit would represent Leonardo Da Vinci's "Last Supper," and then other artists like El Greco or Salvador Dali would be displayed alongside it.

This year the living paintings were shown in a museum away from the procession, because Ruiz said he felt people were coming to Tañarandy and taking pictures of the living paintings and not focusing on the spiritual experience of the procession.

In 2014 Ruiz added a small altar to the event and this year he went bigger, creating a "fruits of the earth" altar that was 29 feet high and served as an inspiration for his papal altarpiece.

"This religious art has changed me and greatly renewed my faith," says Ruiz. "Experiences like this sustain you and help you and are important because reason can't give you what faith can give you."

The Tañarandy event is free to the public, financed by Ruiz because of his

desire to have everyone experience art, no matter his or her socio-economic status. He uses his oil paintings to support himself and his family and to fund art events like Tañarandy.

The artist's figurative oil on canvas paintings capture provincial, everyday Paraguayan scenes from rural life: farmers, musicians, children playing soccer, a mother breastfeeding her child. Ruiz brings warmth and emotions to his tender paintings through his handling of composition and color palette. He sells some of his paintings locally, but also to clients in countries like the United States, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands.

"My paintings always center around Paraguay, but the truth is they are commercial," says Ruiz, who sells his paintings for \$2,000 to \$10,000 apiece. "In Tañarandy my art is purely artistic, not commercial at all."

The corn altar represents the culmination of Ruiz's participatory artwork. The artist's intent lies not in the physical architectural structure but in using that structure as an impetus for gathering people together to share a communal, personal and spiritual experience at the site.

"It is the most important work of art yet because we succeeded in getting so many people to participate," says Ruiz. "The other altars we did, people took pictures, but in this one the people felt like, 'It is mine, it has my name, I chose where to put my coconut.'"

The international attention the altar received, the government awards he was honored with and even the pope's praise could not compare to this compliment. For Koki Ruiz, sharing the ownership of his artwork with thousands of Paraguayans has been the mark of his greatest achievement.

LORENA O'NEIL, a reporter and photojournalist based in New Orleans, covers religion, culture and social justice issues.

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Suffering Servant

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), OCT 18, 2015

Readings: Is 53:10–11; Ps 33:4–22; Heb 4:14–16; Mk 10:35–45

“Whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” (Mk 10:44)

In Chapters 40 to 55 of Isaiah, there are four passages known as the Servant Songs. One of them, quoted as today’s first reading, is about the “suffering servant.” One wonders what it was like to read about this suffering servant in Isaiah, where we hear, “It was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain,” apart from an encounter with the life and death of Jesus. How were these verses understood, in which we are told, “The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities,” before the disciples read them in light of Jesus’ passion and resurrection?

Some modern scholars have proposed that the servant in Isaiah might represent the nation of Israel or the prophets; others identify the servant with an individual, like the prophet Isaiah himself, the Persian king Cyrus or the future Messiah. As for the earliest disciples of Jesus, they were certain that the servant was the prophesied Messiah, who had lived, died and been raised among them. Jesus was the one who was crushed, who bore our iniquities and who “out of his anguish” saw “the light” in his resurrection.

Jesus’ suffering and death were not, as the disciples had initially feared, the destruction of their hopes, but the fulfillment of divine hope. This allowed for heightened reflection to take place on the life of the Messiah, who had walked among them as they read the Law and the Prophets. This reflection

upon Jesus, in light of the Hebrew Scriptures, is the foundation of the New Testament.

The Letter to the Hebrews, for instance, reflected upon Jesus as both human and divine, as the perfect victim and the perfect high priest, “who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” Because of Jesus’ humanity and his suffering on our behalf, we have a Messiah who is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses.” It is this sympathy, born of his incarnation and passion, that allowed Jesus to guide the earliest followers, the kernel of the church, into an understanding of the shared mission the apostles were to carry to the world.

Understanding was not always easy. When Jesus told his apostles that he must suffer and die, James and John find it the proper time to say, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” Jesus does not respond by asking them if they had even heard what he said but asks them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” The brothers Zebedee want “to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” Their answer establishes at least this much: They know Jesus is the Messiah, and they know he will establish God’s kingdom. The problem is one of misunderstanding, not just because Jesus has announced his coming death for the third time but because they desire glory without the suffering.

They will not hear what Jesus has to say: The kingdom will come, but the Messiah must first suffer and die.

Jesus says to be a leader in the church is not to be a “lord” or “tyrant.” Jesus’ goal is not to replace Gentile lords and tyrants with new, improved Jewish lords and tyrants, but in the kingdom, or “reign” of God, rulers must be servants; and

“whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” This is not empty language for the troops from a general who surveys the suffering on the battlefield from the safety of a mountain-top but from one who will suffer for them.

Jesus says that “the Son of Man came not to be



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

As you think of Jesus’ love for humanity, “sympathizing with our weakness,” offering himself “for many,” how do you respond to Jesus’ life as the suffering servant? How can you live out Jesus’ command to be a servant for all?

ART: TAD A. DUNNE

served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” In this verse Jesus interprets his death as a sacrificial death. The language of “ransom” evokes salvation through purchase, freeing “many” from slavery or capture. “For many” is the language of Is 53:12, in which the servant “poured out himself to death...yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Jesus offers himself out of sympathy for our weakness, for the sake of humanity, which cannot save itself. I am this servant, Jesus says; are you willing to follow me and to serve me through service to all?

JOHN W. MARTENS

JOHN W. MARTENS is a professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Twitter: @BibleJunkies.

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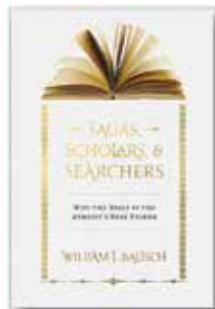
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Pope Francis arrives to lead audience with children from Fabbrica della Pace group at Vatican (Photo by Paul Haring, courtesy Catholic News Service) May 11, 2015.

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