

# America

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## After the Fall Post-Recession Politics

CHARLES R. MORRIS

THE MEANING  
OF SUPERMAN

THE FOLEY POETRY  
CONTEST WINNER

# OF MANY THINGS

**T**he applause was polite but perfunctory as the first performer walked to center stage and sat down at the Steinway grand. Her slim profile, size 0 evening dress (I'm guessing) and long hair held back from her face by a sparkling clasp announced that this Chinese-American was a teenager or only slightly older. Her name, according to the program, was Audrey. She looked small and weak in relation to the large, weighty instrument that was opened up in front of her, until she relaxed her wrists and touched the keys. The moment the first chords of J. S. Bach's "Prelude and Fugue in G-sharp Minor" from "The Well-Tempered Clavier Book II," rolled out, she was in command.

We had come to the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall for the 77th Young Musicians Concert, sponsored by the Associated Music Teachers League. The program featured 17 young musicians in high school and college, winners of the league's annual competition. The program itself was full of show-pieces, technically rigorous works by Mozart, Liszt, Chopin, Handel and Schumann and several composers new to me, all designed to impress. The performers, as is typical of this age range, varied widely in size and physical maturity, but they all played their instruments (piano, cello or voice) like adults.

This was a custom-made Mother's Day event, though every father present, camcorder or camera in hand, must have felt it as an early Father's Day, too. I attended the concert as the guest of a friend, whose eldest son, Daniel, a tall, handsome youth with Van Cliburn hair, played Claude Debussy's "Arabesque No. 1." His fluid fingering and clear tones caused the audience to applaud with foot-stomping gusto and even a few shouts when he stood for his bow. His achievement is all the more extraordinary because Daniel is blind.

The concert was a meaningful public

display of the rewards of long-term, focused commitment and hard work, rewards that are found in the doing. Every musician who auditioned, not just the winners, has earned these rewards. Unwittingly, one musician even offered a visual metaphor for so much effort. As Emirhan bent over his cello, producing a resonance that wrapped the audience in warmth, three drops of sweat slid down the instrument's wooden body, rivulets lit up like neon strands by the stage lights.

What we saw and heard at Carnegie Hall was not only the beauty of the music and the creativity exercised in interpreting it, but the passion of the young to make music, not just listen to it. Passion, even joy, was visible on the faces of these performers and audible in their playing and singing. And although most of the pieces were solos, behind every soloist is a family that has been willing to alter its schedule, budget and calendar for years on end to accommodate the budding musician. This realization moved me, too.

May and June mark many year-end celebrations of achievement, from recitals and championship games to graduations. It is a season of endings and beginnings, transitions in which family and friends can support the young, acknowledge their focus and sacrifices, and guide them toward the next life phase, whether college, employment, marriage or something else. It also works the other way round: the vigor and ardor of young people who achieve astounding feats encourage and console their elders. Hurrah for that.

By the end of the concert, I found myself pondering a delicious irony, given the number of Chinese-Americans who had performed: Perhaps the Chinese would save Western classical music, much as the Romans saved Greek art and the Irish "saved civilization"—the Chinese and all the other dedicated music students aflame with passion.

**KAREN SUE SMITH**

# America

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Cover: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, May 7, 2012. Reuters/Brendan McDermid.

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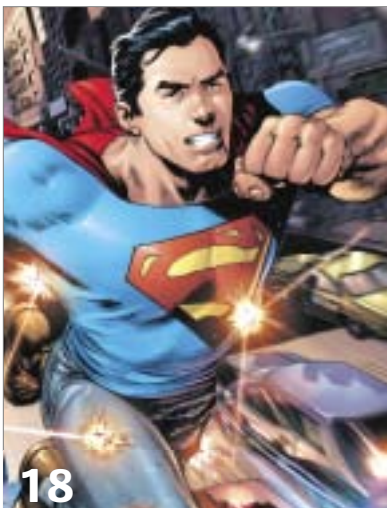
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## ON THE WEB

Ross Douhat, right, talks about his book *Bad Faith* on our podcast. Plus, John W. O'Malley, S.J., on **medieval universities** and an archive of past **Foley poetry contest** winners. All at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).





### The Price Is Not Right

The educational debt burden shouldered by U.S. college students finally may have caught the nation's attention. Student loan debt, at more than \$1 trillion, has surpassed credit card debt in size. And the high rate of default among student borrowers is rising. A less obvious factor is the growing number of for-profit colleges, which enroll 11 percent of college students. These students receive a quarter of federal college loans, yet many drop out of college with debt but no degree. Consequently, they default at a much higher rate than graduates. Congressional bills that would tie the availability of federal student loans to a college's own graduation rate and/or student loan default rate ought to be passed for the sake of student borrowers and taxpayers alike. Still, the issue of student debt touches something deeper than the staggering sum owed.

The bottom line is not merely financial. Rather, U.S. society must decide a question of values: Is an affordable college education for qualified applicants a national priority? Only an educated society can compete globally or play a leading role on the world stage. If affordable education is not a priority, then state and local governments will continue to pass the burden to their colleges, which will pass it on to their students. Already state and local government spending per college student is lower than it has been for the last 25 years. If affordable education is a priority, however, then citizens will have to elect leaders who support public colleges students can afford.

### Moral Hazard

Jamie Dimon, the chairman and chief operating officer of JPMorgan Chase, has a reputation as one of the brightest and most articulate of Wall Street bankers. He has also been one of the fiercest opponents of increased regulation of the banking sector following the Wall Street collapse of 2008. In mid-May he confessed a \$2 billion loss in derivative trading by the bank's London office and predicted the losses "could double within the next few quarters." Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this latest Wall Street drama is that Mr. Dimon and other major players at JPMorgan seem unable to explain precisely how the losses occurred.

The accounts, Mr. Dimon acknowledged, were badly managed and poorly supervised, but he failed to note that the losses came from a product that insures trades in other securities, similar to those that produced the financial crisis. He did admit, however, that the timing of the loss was a gift to the proponents of regulation. We agree.

That four years after the Wall Street debacle, the chairman of a leading bank that escaped the crisis unscathed could admit to trades that were "stupid" and "sloppy" is a clear sign that self-regulation in today's massive, computer-driven markets is insufficient. The need for tougher, not weaker, regulation is clear. Only a Dodd-Frank Act on steroids, including a fully empowered Volcker Rule ban on proprietary trading by commercial banks, will reinstate the common-sense controls lost in the ill-advised 1999 repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act. To be effective, these must be backed by adequate staffing and funding for regulators. It is apparent that bankers still need to be protected from themselves, and U.S. taxpayers deserve to be protected from another costly bail out.

### A Yes to Dialogue

Pope Benedict XVI has put a priority on dialogue with the unbelieving world. For that reason, he expanded the Pontifical Council for Culture with an initiative, called The Court of the Gentiles, to improve communication between believers and nonbelievers, which is often impaired, in his words, by "mutual ignorance, skepticism or indifference." To lead that dialogue, he appointed Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, whose leadership has met with widespread praise. When critics challenged the inclusion of nonbelievers in the interreligious witness to peace in Assisi last fall, the cardinal defended Pope Benedict XVI's initiative as "an attempt to reassert the importance of the relationship of faith and reason."

When controversies broke out lately over invitations by the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Council for Culture to scientists whose research, especially on stem cells, was thought to contravene Catholic teaching, the cardinal rose to give a vigorous defense of dialogue with the church's ideological opponents. "It's a shaky or fundamentalist grasp of faith that sparks suspicion or fear of the other," Catholic News Service reported the cardinal saying. "When you are well formed, you can listen to other people's reasons," he added. Solid, serious catechesis is compatible with respectful dialogue.

At a time when it seems that rote repetition of catechetical formulae is more and more expected of even the most educated Catholics, the cardinal's openness to dialogue and his trust in Catholics of mature faith and learning to carry on such dialogue are reassuring. In the modern world, the scandal is not that Vatican officials would engage scientists who disagree with church teaching, but rather that such engagement is regarded as taboo.

# Christian Correction

Though the duty of Christians to correct one another goes back to the New Testament (Mt 18:35), for those charged with offering correction it has never been an easy task. St. Augustine wrestled with the issue of whether and how to correct sinners and heretics. "It is a deep and difficult matter to estimate what each one can endure," he wrote. "And I doubt that many have become better because of impending punishment.... If you punish people, you may ruin them. If you leave them unpunished, you may ruin others. I admit that I make mistakes.... What trembling, what darkness" (Letter 95.3). Every church disciplines its members, penalizing those whose conduct is judged unsuitable for disciples of Jesus. For Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians, as well as Catholics, discipline is the hard edge of discipleship.

In recent weeks two Catholic women and members of a Midwestern parish were surprised by the penalties threatened or inflicted upon them. In April, Emily Herx, a Catholic teacher in Fort Wayne, Ind., was fired from her school after it was revealed that she had received in vitro fertilization treatments. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend explained the firing, saying that priests must offer "correction" to parishioners. Earlier, Christa Dias, who worked at two Catholic schools in Cincinnati, was fired for using artificial insemination. And at Saint Mary's Parish in Platteville, Wis., Bishop Robert Morlino reportedly threatened parishioners who had been critical of pastoral decisions made by their traditionalist clergy with interdict.

Both those rebuked and their fellow parishioners expressed surprise. "For two years my supervisor has known about it and said she was praying for us," said Emily Herx, "so there was no warning." Christa Dias echoed this. "I've always wanted to have a baby," she said. "I didn't think it would be a problem." The head of the church finance council at St. Mary's said, "There's almost shock and awe." News of these and other incidents lead us to reflect on the pastoral practice of discipline in the Christian community, especially at a time when charging others with unorthodox opinions or with leading an insufficiently Christian life has so often become enmeshed in the culture wars.

Professed Christians endeavor to lead a Christ-like life, and correction is in order when a person's behavior fails in an egregious way to conform to that Christic pattern. Because the aim of correction, moreover, is reform of life, it should

endeavor above all to educate those in question in a loving way. Educating parishioners and employees of Catholic institutions on the cost of discipleship, moreover, is always in order. The New Testament recommends a graduated process of correction, where the shock of public rebuke is avoided. Public correction, where necessary, is signaled in advance by earlier private efforts. First fellow Christians encounter each other one on one. If personal encounter fails, the next step is what we would today call a small-group intervention. Only when more private efforts fail is communal or public reprimand appropriate (Mt 18:15-17).

Furthermore, the Western Christian tradition of pastoral care is clear about how Christians should correct one another. Correction, even by those in authority, should be done with modesty (2 Tm 2:25; 2 Thes 3:15) and a due sense of one's own sinfulness (Mt 7:5), understanding that judgment belongs to God alone (1 Cor 4:5; Mt 13:29). These pastoral cautions need to be applied especially in responding to self-appointed watchdog groups eager to condemn others. They should be strongly reminded that the tradition holds that where possible, correction should be done privately, not in public. That seems a pertinent and wise counsel, especially when the offenders are ignorant of church teaching. Those applying the discipline, moreover, should take into account how a public penalty for unwitting disobedience to church teaching may be as scandalous to many of the faithful in its way as the offense itself is to others.

In our contemporary situation, moreover, where impugning the character of others has become a habitual tactic in the culture wars, the traditional practice of private correction should be encouraged, especially among overzealous clerics and laypeople who seem to forget that correction is a duty of a charity that demands delicacy in its application. Solicitous of the good of all, including the accused, Augustine counseled that in the process of correction "nobody [should] render to someone evil for evil." Critics should, therefore, try to avoid making a private offense public and refrain from forcing an issue into the public arena or tying a bishop's hands, as is often the case. On being alerted to allegations, moreover, those in authority would do well to be wary of taking action until they have met face to face with the persons concerned.



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## AUTISM CRISIS

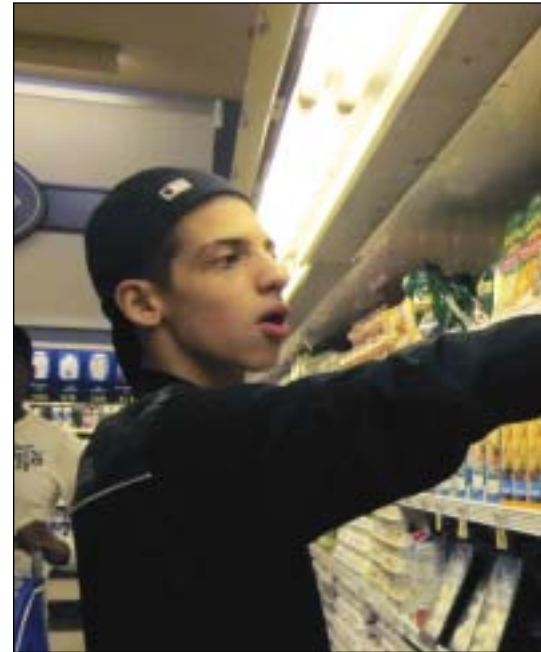
### Study Suggests More Services Needed for Young Adults

**W**ith growing numbers of families across the country affected by autism spectrum disorder—over all one in 88 children will be diagnosed with A.S.D., and one in 54 boys—how well is U.S. society preparing for autism’s coming of age? A study published in the June issue of *Pediatrics* suggests cause for concern.

The study, funded by the Organization for Autism Research, Autism Speaks and the National Institute of Mental Health, found that young adults with autism spectrum disorder are far less likely to continue their education or find a job after high school compared with young adults with other disabilities. Only about 35 percent of young adults with autism attended college, and only 55 percent were employed during the first six years after high school. That rate compares unfavorably with those of young adults with other disabilities. Eighty-six percent of young people with a speech or language impairment, 94 percent of those with a learning disability and 69 percent with mental retardation were employed during the same time frame.

The report “mainly confirms what a lot of us already knew,” said Jennifer Borek, a faculty member of the University of Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education and a member of the Autism Task Force for the National Catholic Partnership on

Disability. Borek is the parent of a young adult with autism. In the short term, she said, the report may only “add to the anxiety” parents with children on the autism spectrum already feel. For many the future is a chronic worry,



particularly when they consider what may happen when the various developmental and skill-building services parents have been able to arrange expire as children reach their teen years.

But ultimately “it’s helpful to have

## IRAQ’S REFUGEES

### After War, Chaldean Catholics Face Moral Risks in United States

**I**raq’s Chaldean Catholics fleeing physical danger in their homeland often find themselves unprepared for the moral threats awaiting them in the United States, said the head of Chaldean Catholics in the western United States. Because of a lack of respect for the unborn in the United States, along with different understandings of marriage and a general disregard for Christian values, Chaldean families often find themselves in a world they are not accustomed to, said Bishop Sarhad Y. Jammo, of San Diego, of the Eparchy

of St. Peter the Apostle. Chaldean Catholics are the largest Eastern-rite community in the United States. Their numbers are growing because of a large and steady stream of refugees since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

“This is the irony; that is the dilemma,” Bishop Jammo said. They escape from gunfire in Iraq and go to the United States to find physical security, “but then they face moral attack,” he said. The bishop spoke from Rome on May 17 during an *ad limina* visit to the Vatican with other heads of

Eastern Catholic dioceses in the United States.

Chaldean Bishop Ibrahim N. Ibrahim, who heads the Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle of Detroit, the diocese for Chaldean Catholics in the Eastern United States, said the biggest challenge in his diocese is how to help families who have been unable to go to church for years. Many of the refugees spent five to 10 years in a transit country such as Lebanon, Jordan or Syria before they found a home in the United States. The bishops’ aim is to make them feel at home “after those years of suffering” and to help them become acclimated to their new surroundings and reignite their faith.

Many refugees have “become con-





**Tristan Williams, a student with autism at Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J., shops at a supermarket as part of a special education program that teaches life skills**

this kind of confirmation,” Borek said. It is information parents can use to raise awareness of the special challenges of young people with autism and the need for more developmental and family support services. Even young people

with “mild” autism or Asperger syndrome face significant problems dealing with the everyday world, navigating morning routines and social interactions other people can take for granted.

“Many families with children with autism describe leaving high school as falling off a cliff because of the lack of services for adults,” said the study’s senior author Paul Shattuck, an assistant professor of social work at Washington University in St. Louis. “So much of media attention focuses on children. It’s important for people to realize autism does not disappear in adolescence. The majority of lifespan is spent in adulthood.”

The study suggests that more thought and resources need to be directed to figuring out how to help A.S.D. young people manage the transition to adulthood and whatever level of self-sufficiency they may be capable of establishing. About 50,000 youths with autism will turn 18 this year in the United States.

Borek said that across the country there is a vast disparity in how well Catholic parishes, dioceses and religious orders have responded to the challenge of autism’s growing population. Some have programs in place; some remain far from welcoming to people with autism and their families, even though there is probably not a church community in the nation without a family touched by autism.

Borek said more outreach from bishops and parish priests to families who are often struggling with the varied economic, practical and emotional challenges of autism seems necessary. If families with autistic children are not visible in church pews, she said, that probably just means they would be there if parishes were more welcoming or offered services they could use. The challenge remains, she said, of helping the wider society see the “beautiful potential” of each individual with autism and how easily and frequently it is overlooked.

fused” during their hiatus abroad, either losing their faith because they had little to no access to a priest and pastoral care or because they found solace in a Protestant community, he said.

“However, when they arrive in the States, we get them back,” he said, when they discover the large, vibrant Chaldean Catholic community. “They want to be with their own citizens, their own people, family and friends” and hear their own language. Bishop Ibrahim estimates there are more than 180,000 Chaldean Catholics in his eparchy alone.

For both bishops, funding new parishes and pastoral programs for their growing number of parishioners is an enormous challenge. Despite generous help from the U.S. Conference of

Catholic Bishops, Bishop Jammo said the economic investment needed to fund Bible study programs, youth groups, catechisms and provide for seminarians, priests, nuns and teachers is “overwhelming.” Many Chaldeans arrive in the United States with appropriate skills and education and a desire to work, but there are no jobs, he said. Hence, he added, many are not only unable to support the parish and its work; they need financial and social assistance from the church.

“I am racing against time because I don’t want to lose even one soul,” he said.



**Many Chaldean Catholics, shown here at a community meeting in Amman, Jordan, wait for years to come to the United States.**

PHOTO: KEVIN CLARKE

## 'Outdated' Nukes?

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops joined with other national organizations in amassing more than 50,000 signatures on a petition asking for a change in U.S. nuclear arms policy that was delivered to the White House on May 7. "You must act now to reduce the nuclear danger and the role of nuclear weapons," said the petition. It urged President Obama to "end outdated U.S. nuclear war-fighting strategy, dramatically reduce the number of U.S. nuclear weapons and the number of submarines, missiles and bombers that carry those weapons, and take U.S. nuclear weapons off high alert. Maintaining large numbers of nuclear forces on alert increases the risk of accident or miscalculation." Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, called the petition drive just one of many expressions of support for overdue changes in a nuclear weapons strategy "still burdened by Cold War thinking."

## Resource Curse

Congress should support laws that promote transparency among companies that mine in the Congo and resist watering down new regulations "to half measures that may save money, but cost lives," said Bishop Nicolas Djomo Lola, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Congo, in testimony before a House subcommittee on May 10. Speaking not as a business executive or a financial expert but as "a religious leader, who is deeply disturbed by the terrible violence and suffering that has dominated life in Eastern Congo since 1996," Bishop Djomo Lola said: "This violence has destroyed families, villages and communities. One prominent driver of the violence is illicit mining conducted by

## NEWS BRIEFS

The television news analyst Thomas D. Williams, L.C., was **removed from public ministry** on May 15 by the Legionaries of Christ after admitting he had a relationship with a woman "a number of years ago" and fathered her child. + Members of the **Shalom community** came to the Vatican on May 16 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their founding and the final approval of their statutes by the Vatican. + On May 14 the former British prime minister, **Tony Blair**, said the world would be heading for "tragedy and disaster" without faith. + Sued by the Vatican after an ad campaign that used a photograph doctored to show Pope Benedict XVI kissing a Muslim leader, the **Italian fashion house Benetton** reached an out-of-court settlement on May 15 that requires it to make an unspecified donation to a Catholic charity. + The world's oldest Catholic bishop, **Bishop Antoine Nguyen Van Thien of Vietnam**, died on May 13 in France two months after his 106th birthday. + Bishop Bernard Fellay, superior of the **Society of St. Pius X**, acknowledged on May 11 that there might be a split in the breakaway society if it decides to reconcile with the Vatican.



**Shalom community at St. Peter's**

the many armed groups in Eastern Congo." He urged U.S. politicians and business people to "protect the life and human dignity of the Congolese people by conducting legal, transparent and accountable international commerce. We are confident that they do not want to be part of the misery that has plagued Eastern Congo for years."

## No 'Accommodation'

Although the Obama administration's "accommodation" for religious employers to a government mandate that contraceptives and sterilization be included in most health plans "may create an appearance of...compromise," it does not change the administration's fundamental position, attorneys for the U.S. bishops said on May 15. "We are convinced that no public good is served by this unprecedented nationwide mandate and that forcing individual and

institutional stakeholders to sponsor and subsidize an otherwise widely available product over their religious and moral objections serves no legitimate, let alone compelling, government interest," said Anthony R. Picarello and Michael F. Moses, general counsel and associate general counsel, respectively, to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in comments filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The comments were in response to the administration's "advance notice of proposed rulemaking" published on March 16 in the Federal Register, which offered new ways for religious organizations to comply with the new requirements. The attorneys argued that the best solution to their objections would be to rescind the mandate.

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# Sandbox Ethics

For our youngest daughter's birthday, our family built a sandbox. Digging for treasure is one of the kids' favorite games. Whether they are playing pirates or prospectors, the kids love digging up shiny rocks and other "jewels." As parents, we set the rules for the sandbox: no hurting or hitting, no busting up the nearby plants or wellhead; all must be allowed to play and share the treasure.

Digging for treasure is no game for many around the world. In too many places natural resources are a curse, not a blessing, fueling and financing conflict, corrupting business and government and poisoning the environment. Without good governance, prospectors become pirates, stealing treasure. The people nearest the mines and oilfields suffer. They become victims of conflict and rape; they are made refugees and internally displaced persons as armed groups fight over resources. Their land and water are polluted by unscrupulous companies that extract resources without environmental protections. Pollution robs poor subsistence farming and fishing communities of health, food and jobs. Kleptocrat rulers, warlords and companies benefit while lying and covering up the money trail of profits. Basic "sandbox ethics" rules of social justice are violated: people and the environment are hurt, and not all are allowed to participate and share the treasures.

The church around the world is working to build peace, justice and good governance, particularly in areas

where there are conflicts over resources. A thoughtful recent book published by Catholic Relief Services, *Extractives and Equity*, highlights the church's creative efforts to break the resource curse. The reactive work of the church to care for victims of violence is well known: humanitarian relief, refugee care and ministries to internally displaced persons. Less appreciated are the church's proactive efforts to prevent violence—for example by deploying tens of thousands of election monitors in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Nigeria.

Many of these issues were addressed during a seminar in Rome on May 29–30 called "New Challenges for Catholic Peacebuilding," sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in collaboration with Caritas Internationalis and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network. Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, noted that Pope John XXIII's encyclical "Peace on Earth," published 50 years ago, still animates the church's work to build peace. Michel Roy of Caritas Internationalis and Marie Denis of Pax Christi International discussed the practical ways their organizations build peace.

The U.S. Embassy to the Holy See also sponsored a discussion on religious peacebuilding, co-sponsored by Notre Dame's Kroc Institute of Peace and Catholic University's Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies, including contributions from the U.S.

ambassador to the Vatican, Miguel Díaz, and myself. The Catholic Church's concern for peace is not unique, but we do have unique capacities to build peace in practice. In the language of U.S. foreign policy, we have considerable assets "forward deployed in countries" to build peace. We have peacebuilding doctrine; diplomats from the Holy See; grass-roots organizations like C.R.S., Caritas, Pax Christi, justice and peace commissions and the Community of Sant'Egidio; as well as religious orders, schools, hospitals and universities.

Bishop Nicolas Djomo, head of the bishops' conference of the D.R.C., testified in Congress, urging that U.S. law be enforced regarding conflict minerals.

Since 2010, U.S. law requires companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange to be transparent about their supply chains. The law has not yet been implemented, as companies seek to delay and dilute these good governance efforts to follow the money trail that currently finances war.

By contrast, in Ghana, where oil and gold have been discovered, the church is trying to get ahead of the curve, to put good governance laws into place for transparency and resource-sharing before the oil starts flowing.

As citizens and as members of the church, we have duties to ensure that digging for treasure brings peace and prosperity. We have unique opportunities to make "Pacem in Terris" real in the 21st century.

Digging  
for treasure  
should  
bring  
peace and  
prosperity.

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MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE is a member of the advisory board of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network.





Loren Hart, a member of the Catholic Worker, at an Occupy Wall Street protest on May 1, 2012, in New York.

20% of  
American  
children  
live in  
poverty.  
Serious  
changes  
needed.



COULD THE 2008 RECESSION HERALD  
A PROGRESSIVE REVIVAL?

# Cycles of Change

BY CHARLES R. MORRIS

**P**olitics usually runs in cycles. The 2008 financial crash looked like the harbinger of a major cyclical turn. That looks considerably more doubtful now than it did four years ago, but there are still real grounds for hope.

It will be five years this June that the sudden crash of a Bear Stearns hedge fund signaled that all was not well in American finance. And the crashes kept coming, like the slow-motion collapse of giant icebergs—one bank, one fund, one temple of finance after another—for an excruciating year and a half. The American debacle centered around housing, which is still trapped in a mire of bad mortgages, fraudulent foreclosures and lost paperwork.

Now, just as we have been spotting wisps of a recovery in the United States, parts of the Eurozone have fallen back into recession. In Greece a controlled, technical default averted disaster for the time being, but the crisis has merely moved from an acute to a chronic stage. In Ireland, Italy, Spain, Portugal and France, reducing debt requires reducing public spending, which reduces total gross domestic product and employment. Several countries have already experienced serious unrest. If one or the other country chooses to repudiate its debt or leave the Eurozone, it could possibly trigger another 2008-scale global economic thrombosis.

Is this a run of really bad luck, like having your house hit by two successive pieces of space junk?

No; the crises in both America and Europe are symptoms of the hyper-financialization of advanced economies over the past 30 years or so. The crashes and the damage they inflict are toxic backwash from the bloated and rotten carcass of an old regime.

## The Era of Hyper-Financialization

For the first 40 years or so after World War II, the financial sector accounted for about 10 percent of G.D.P. and 12 percent to 15 percent of corporate profits. Bankers always got paid somewhat more than the average worker but much the same as other workers

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CHARLES R. MORRIS is a fellow of the Century Foundation. His recent books include *The Trillion Dollar Meltdown* and *The Sages*. A new book, *The Dawn of Innovation*, will be published in the fall.



with the same education. By 2006, however, finance had grown to about 16 percent of G.D.P. and 40 percent of corporate profits, and finance professionals were being paid far more than anyone else except C.E.O.'s of top companies, rock stars and first-round quarterback draft picks.

Here is an example of how outsized that pay was. From 2003 through 2008, Merrill Lynch generated more than \$100 billion in revenue. It paid more than \$80 billion of that to its workers, a disproportionately large portion of this to a small elite group at the top. At the same time Merrill cumulatively lost almost \$15 billion and left a trail of financial havoc—millions of foreclosures, great swaths of empty houses and huge losses for its investors, like pension funds and endowments, and among its retail customers.

Wall Street claims to earn its high pay for “financial innovation,” but in real life, its innovation is mostly devoted to avoiding regulation and taxes. Regulated entities, like banks, sold off toxic loans and mortgages to the unregulated “shadow banks,” like hedge funds, that dolled them up and painted on lipstick and sold them throughout the world. This was a useless and destructive enterprise, cooked up solely for the purpose of generating fees and bonuses for the very rich.

That insatiable fee-seeking infects all financial markets. More than half of all stock trades are now held for less than 11 seconds. Time was that oil trading was the province of people who were in businesses that depended on oil, so if they bought future oil—which the markets allow you to do—it was because they needed to ensure future supplies. Now almost all such trading is done by bank or hedge fund trading desks solely for speculation. They take much larger positions and can generate violent seesaws in market prices, which often work real economic hardships even as they generate huge trading profits.

New regulations in all the advanced countries are designed to stop such behavior. Yet bankers everywhere are furiously lobbying to stop them and will largely succeed. The good news, however, is that the financial sector is starting to shrink and should continue to do so for the foreseeable future, new regulations or not. Almost all of the sector's revenue boom in the 2000s came from dangerous junk, like second-lien loans against homes with subprime first mortgages, that sane investors now avoid like the bird flu. Finance profits have fallen sharply, while bankers are mourning the bonuses of old and worrying about staying employed.

The auguries, in short, are that the era of hyperfinancialization is probably ending. The public is now aware of how fraudulent and destructive the boom years were and how much the new Wall Street fortunes were built by sheer pillage. That is the kind of issue that can galvanize ordinary people. Far more than in other countries, Americans have been tolerant of great differences in wealth because they assumed it was fairly earned and that with some luck and talent they could become wealthy themselves.

If that assumption of fairness disappears, American politics will turn with it. Changing attitudes are evident in the way Mitt Romney has had to struggle on the presidential campaign trail to explain his wealth. Americans are starting to understand how much the deck has become stacked in favor of the people at the very top. A hallmark of social mobility is the degree to which your parents' wealth determines your success. By that measure, the United States now looks much worse than almost all the major countries of Europe, which is embarrassing.

## The Cyclical Reset

Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. proposed that in the United States, conservative/monied and radical/progressive parties alternated in roughly 25- to 30-year cycles. The clock was driven by the internal logic of elections. To win a national office, each party has to pull together its whole constituency, sensible and extremist alike. Over time, because extremists usually care the most, their influence grows and their party becomes an absurd caricature of its original ideas. And so the wheel turns.

The 2008 presidential election looked like such a turn, especially since the fingerprints of the plutocrats and their political lackeys were all over the economic crash. Now that turn is in doubt, in part because the recession has been so severe that people are forgetting how it started. But if Obama squeaks back into office in 2012, a new cycle should take hold.

Despite what one hears, the deficit should not cripple a progressive agenda. Few people realize that federal taxes of all kinds, roughly 15 percent of G.D.P., are the lowest since about 1950. Of the 30 largest industrial countries, the United States consistently ranks near the bottom in taxes, including all state and local taxes, as a share of G.D.P. Merely allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire on schedule would nearly balance the budget. A tad less enthusiasm for

## Americans are starting to understand how much the deck has become stacked in favor of the people at the very top.

### ON THE WEB

Ross Douthat talks about his book *Bad Faith*.  
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endless foreign wars would also help a lot. Taxes have little to do with national competitiveness. Germany's taxes are about 50 percent higher than ours relative to G.D.P., and Germany is easily out-competing us.


The root of America's serious competitiveness problem is the dismal educational preparedness of our young people, at least those without the good fortune to be born into upper-middle-class homes. Good jobs are available in business services, like accounting and shipping, computer-related technologies and health care. All of them require education, at least at the community college level. Such programs have been drastically cut back, not just since the crash, but for a couple of decades. They have been replaced by often fly-by-night "technical schools," which saddle lower and middle-income kids with mountains of debt and do little to keep them in school. Some of the most financially successful and ethically shady of the profit-making schools are owned by—guess who—Goldman Sachs and its ilk.

### Investment Strategy

The progressive agenda is very long. Infrastructure spending to rebuild dilapidated highways, commuter trains and airports—and to rectify the shameful inadequacy of U.S. broadband networks—would be good job creators. Much of the spending could be financed with private-sector revenue bonds. We also need to do a much better job readying our young people for the demands of today's job market. American students consistently rank behind our major competitors in math and science, and the very best jobs are going to people with quantitative competence.

None of this is easy, and it will not happen overnight. In the real world, no matter what happens in the fall election, we are not going to let all the Bush tax cuts expire. Americans are so convinced they are overtaxed that a recovery in state and local educational provision will come slowly. We know that too much Medicare spending goes to highly profitable treatments of dubious benefit, but that will be hard to fix. The wealthy, by definition, have ample resources to defend their privileges. Real change comes through persistent slogging, not by national epiphanies.

The severity of the downturn, stumbling at the White House and scorched-earth Republican opposition clearly derailed the cyclical momentum. The administration's major accomplishment, health care reform—which had eluded the country for almost 90 years—will be lost unless the president wins another term in office, even if it survives scrutiny by a very right-wing phalanx of Supreme Court justices.

But holding on to the White House now looks much more likely that it did just months ago. With a little luck, aided by the unattractiveness of the Republican hopefuls, we may really be on the verge of a new and comparatively long-term cycle of true progressive, social justice-oriented politics. 

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POETRY | JAMES S. TORRENS

## MORTAL MEASURES

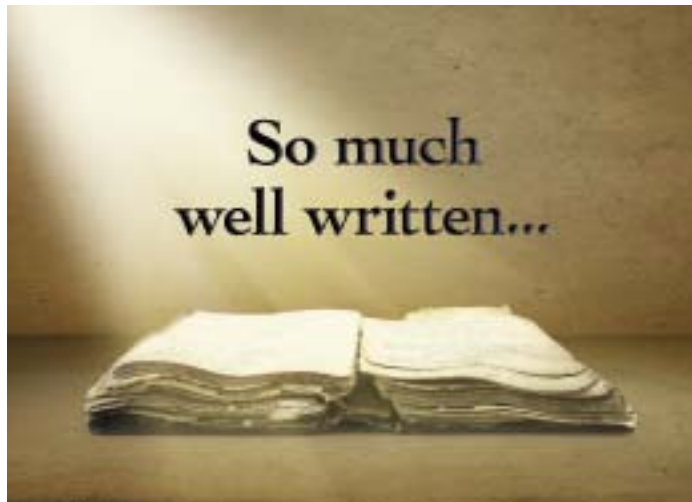
*This year's Foley poetry contest*

God's plenty—that is how lovers of English literature have referred to “The Canterbury Tales,” by Geoffrey Chaucer. And that is the sense I have this year from the heavy flow of entries to the Foley poetry contest. Often one would strike me with its poignancy or its sharp observation, and I would put the poem aside, regretting that I could not tell the writer in person, “Nice going.” Often, too, my judgment would be: “This poem's complete. It does its job—not a world-beater perhaps, but admirable.”

For meritorious phrasing, consider the following. An elderly sister (Lois Houlihan, F.M.M.) says back to the Lord, “This is my body given for you.” Brenda McLaughlin reminds us “a centurion's spear cut between God's ribs.” Raymonde Motil observes ruefully, “When I become queen of the world,/ I will have much work to do.” Conchita Ryan Collins illustrates “the familiar hush” of snowfall by the quietness when straw was strewn on the streets around the house of the dying Giuseppe Verdi. Dorothy LaMantia says in “Desert Wisdom,” “Teach us, O Saguaro,” as you “sip water welled in secret.” William O'Leary says of modern poetry, “So much well written,/ so few well read.”

“Mortality touches the mind,” said Virgil long ago, *Mentem mortalia tan-*

*gunt*. It certainly does amid these poems, many of them by caregivers. In “A Short Visit,” Kenneth Feltges records with gratitude the sudden clarity of an Alzheimer's patient just before dying. The Rev. Joseph Oblinger of Bozeman, Mont., in his 65th year of



ministry, composes a poetic obituary for a parishioner. Patricia O'Neill Hoying says to someone unidentified: “Fare thee well/ on thy journey/ past the flesh./ All are bending that way/ though not beckoned yet.”

Florence Bruce admits, “Growing up, I often wondered/ what my young mother's reaction was/ when she discovered herself suddenly dead.” “I hear her screaming, ‘No! No! No!’/ still motivated by earth's business.” Mortality touches me also in the recent death of the Oregonian poet, Leonard John Cirino, a fruitful contributor to *America*. With his *Pygmy Forest Press*, Cirino was an encourager, one of those heroes of modern poetry.

Jennifer Homan, by contrast, gives us a lift in “I Love the Spoons,” a catalogue of their variety. Anne Harman surprises as much by her photographs as by the poem “Hummingbird,” which they accompany. Esthel Na, a “fresh-woman at Immaculate Heart High School,” in Los Angeles, prays that “those who can't fathom happiness,” at least “not yet,” will eventually do so. Her poem is called “Someday.”

Poems arrived from overseas, as usual—from Macau, Greece, India, Kenya, along with England and Ireland. Arpad Fekete writes from Kiskunfelegyhaza in Hungary. From Croatia Walter William Sofar sends in a paean to the United States. At least somewhere we are appreciated! The contest heard from 25 religious brothers and priests, and a record 50 religious sisters, plus a half dozen prison inmates, always welcome.

My fellow judges once again this year were William Rewak, S.J., chancellor of Santa Clara University, and Professor Claudia MonPere McIsaac, also of Santa Clara University.

Our winner this year is Gary J. Boelhower, for his poem “Jacob's Ladder,” printed here, for which we warmly congratulate him. We also laud the runners-up: first of all, Susan Bucci Mockler for “The Wedding Suit”; then Elizabeth Claverie for “Waiting for the Father”; and finally Gerald McCarthy for “Praise Song for My Father.” These fine poems will appear soon in *America*.

JAMES S. TORRENS, S.J., is poetry editor of *America*.

The editors of **America** are pleased to present the winner of the 2012 Foley Poetry Award,  
given in honor of William T. Foley, M.D.

## JACOB'S LADDER

When you are on the ladder with a paint brush  
twenty feet of air between you and the ground  
do not swing in anger or fear at the yellow jackets.

If angels are ascending and descending the ladder  
of your spine let them stretch their strands of light  
into the small spaces between the discs of bone.

When you notice the way your heart can lean  
toward shadow pay attention to the story  
you keep telling yourself as if it were the truth.

If you are keeping track of the times you  
fold the laundry or take out the garbage  
you are not an angel ascending or descending.

When you curse the baby bunny eating lettuce  
from the garden it is time to notice and listen  
how the angels sing of mercy and bread.

If the spider is crawling up your sleeve  
use your opposable thumb and consider the vow  
of the bodhisattva and the levels of humility.

When you forget to roll up the car window  
before the rain storm think of each silver drop  
as an angel descending with blessed reminders.

**GARY J. BOELHOWER**

*GARY BOELHOWER is professor of theology and religious studies at The College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minn. His most recent collection of poems, Marrow, Muscle, Flight, was published by Wildwood River Press in 2011.*



# THE MESSIAH FROM KRYPTON

## *Superman's place in U.S. culture*

Superman turns 74 this month, so it's not a bad time to assess the place of the Man of Steel in our collective consciousness. My own affection for him stems from the 1952 television series "Adventures of Superman," starring George Reeves, which I watched as after-school reruns even before I went to school.

In my mind the hero is inextricably linked to the Sears *Wish Book*. That aptly named digest of dreams arrived every October, allowing plenty of time before Christmas to peruse its promised delights. Therein my 5-year-old self saw, and immediately had to have, the Superman costume that is still being marketed.

Why did I have to have it? Was it simply that I had grown tired of running around the neighborhood with my friends, each of us with a towel tied around his neck? Not at all. It involves an early theological error on my part.

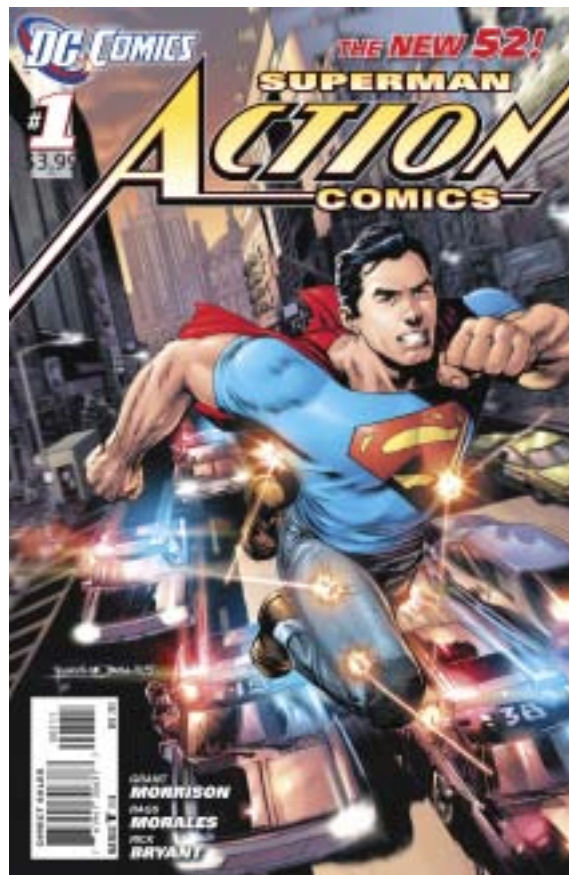
### The Power

I knew that Superman's cape made the wearer impervious to bullets because, like the rest of his costume, it had been sewn by Ma Kent from the swaddling clothes in which the baby Kal-el had arrived, packed in the space-capsule sent from the planet Krypton. The costume offered invulnerability to whoever would wear it.

My error lay in thinking that the cape allowed one to fly. Anyone with a rudimentary grasp of Superman knows that his flying ability comes, like his other superpowers, from his being in the lighter gravitational field of Earth's yellow sun. He was born under the much heavier red sun of Krypton.

Silly me! I thought: Get the costume, get the powers. Several months of

delighted daydreaming passed before that memorable Christmas Eve when I tore open the package, ran to the bedroom my brother and I shared to put it



on and announced that I had to go outside. My parents vetoed that; it was cold. I didn't explain that I planned to jump off our roof because I wanted to see for myself the cape's abilities before displaying such marvelous power in front of the entire family. Several leaps into the air on my own had not yet produced the desired effect. I had to settle for jumping repeatedly off my bed, wondering if Sears had sent a defective costume.

I had put such hope in Superman. But then, our visitor had come from Krypton for that very reason, to instill hope.

Several individuals can claim credit for the creation of Superman. Frederick Nietzsche first used the term in 1883, when he wrote, in German of course, "Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Superman, a rope over an abyss." DC (Detective Comics) had recently changed its name from National Comics, when one of its contributors in Cleveland, Jerry Siegel, a young man fascinated by science fiction, convinced an artist friend, Joe Shuster, to draw the Man of Steel. His first incarnation appeared in a 1933 prose story with illustrations, "The Reign of the Superman."

### The Hope

It is no coincidence that Superman, and the Messianic hope that he instilled, appeared when America needed him most, in the midst of the Great Depression, with war looming abroad. Superman would go on to become a great battler of Nazis. Both Siegel and Shuster were children of Jewish immigrants, as were many DC editors.

If Superman can be seen as a messianic figure, his claim to that title, from a Jewish perspective, is stronger than that of Jesus. Jesus was executed, but Superman triumphs as the mighty one who

fights constantly for a reign of peace and justice, and "the American way." He is, after all, an American Messiah. And his origins are replete with Mosaic pedigree. Like Moses, Superman was sent off alone by his mother to save him from destruction. Moses sailed away through the bulrushes in a basket, Superman in a rocket from the doomed planet Krypton.

I am embarrassed to admit that, in praying and pondering my way into the priesthood, I associated that vocation with superhero Messianism—as when Superman rises above earthly passions, even his love for Lois Lane.

A theologian would want to point out that Superman's Christological aspect comes from the dramatic tension created by his ability to suffer on our behalf. He is vulnerable to Kryptonite, pieces of his doomed planet that made their way to earth.

Yet we tend to see only the human persona that Superman assumes in Clark Kent. Even as a child I never understood how simply putting on glasses made it impossible for Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen to recognize Superman. Yet our own inability to discern Christ among us is shown with poignancy by this analogy: Lois Lane falls for the Man of Steel even as she continues to rebuff the "mild mannered" Clark Kent. We are all Lois Lanes when it comes to Christ. We want the hero; we eschew the humility and the humanity.

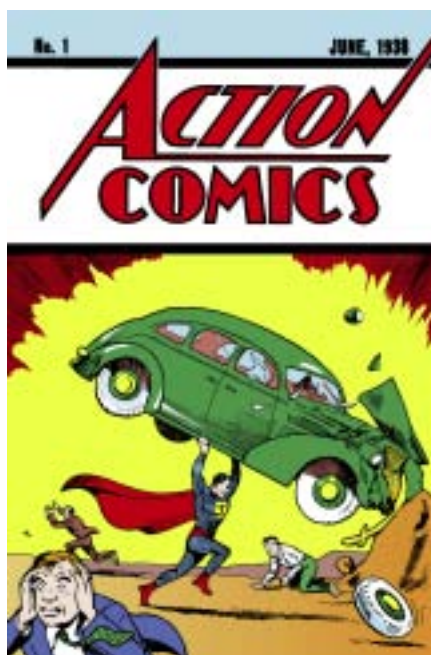
Our attraction to superheroes has other manifestations. Posters of Barack Obama dressed as Superman appeared during the 2008 presidential campaign. Caroline Kennedy explained her endorsement of the president by saying, "Over the years, I've been deeply moved by the people who've told me they wished they could feel inspired and hopeful about America the way people did when my father was president. This sense is even more profound today." Has President Obama disappointed more than the left wing of the Democratic Party? Or is disappointment a predictable human response to any messiah? We seem to repudiate anyone who does not immediately usher in the kingdom on our terms.

Perhaps that's a subtle danger of any Superman/messiah figure, that being of nondivine origin, he can turn into a deluded warrior who simply smashes whatever he mistakenly and arrogantly judges to be evil and recklessly champions whatever he thinks is "truth, justice, and the American way."

It is still a question whether George Reeves, the actor whom I first associated with Superman, committed suicide

or was murdered. Messianism is a millstone.

The late Christopher Reeve, who



The first appearance of Superman.

portrayed Superman in three blockbuster movies during the 1970s and '80s, offers a better incarnation of the Man of Steel. Reeve became a quadriplegic after a tragic fall from a

horse, but he went on to show the world what grace in the face of suffering can accomplish. His was a fall, not from Krypton to Earth, but from the heights of Hollywood into our own suffering humanity.

Did we follow his wheelchair-bound odyssey with the devotion that we lavish on the Man of Steel? No. A man of suffering garners no glow. And there is the Christological rub. In our hearts, we remain Lois Lanes, blind to the love revealed in our midst.

Childhood disappointments usually dissipate quickly. The disappointment I felt over my inability to fly vanished when I wore the Superman costume to kindergarten and became the envy of every boy there. Mrs. Baughman even suggested that we put on a Superman play, since we already had the costume. You can guess who got to play the Man of Steel. It was, after all, my *Wish Book* costume.

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REV. TERRANCE W. KLEIN is chair of the department of theology at St. Bonaventure University in Olean, N.Y., and author of *Vanity Faith: Searching for Spirituality Among the Stars*.

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## BOOKS | PETER REICHARD LOOKING LEFT

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### THE CAUSE The Fight for American Liberalism from Franklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama

By Eric Alterman and Kevin Mattson  
Viking, 576p \$33

Eric Alterman often ends up the reasonable man in the room. He wears the label "liberal" in full view, but he brings integrity to his positions and confronts his opponents with intellectual honesty. One of the nation's foremost media critics and a trained historian, he has insightfully diagnosed a chief malaise of contemporary journalism: its ignorance of

American history. So who better to acquit liberalism while pulling together a history of its development since Franklin D. Roosevelt?

At times, however, *The Cause* reads more like an indictment than a defense. Co-authored with Ohio University historian Kevin Mattson, *The Cause* is a tragic chronicle of misstep after misstep.

Though the authors frequently draw a line between "liberalism" and "the left," they never define it. In fact, the snide left is as often to blame for liberalism's failures as the anti-intellectual right.

The story begins with the triumph





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of liberalism in the Roosevelt era. Though the authors give rather less ink to Roosevelt and the New Deal than one might hope for, they do establish how radical a shift the 1930s represented. After the New Deal, the frame of national debate moved decidedly leftward. The comparatively laissez-faire approach to government that preceded it was no longer in contention. Favoring a return to a pre-F.D.R. America became more or less a fringe position.

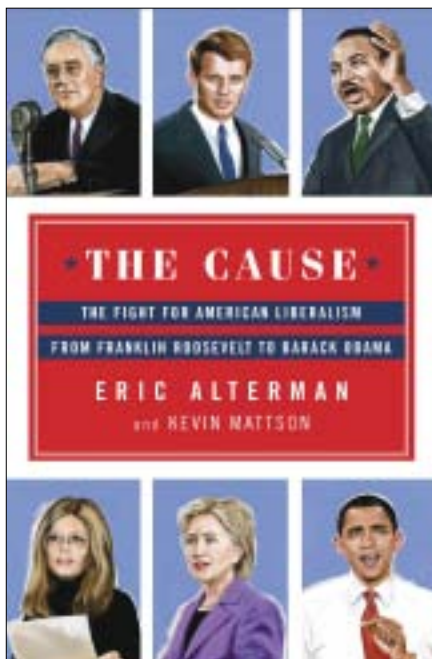
The burst of change wrought in the early years of the New Deal would wind down in the 1940s, and attention would shift from social welfare priorities to civil rights. At this point, but not for the last time, a president would advocate for, and then abandon, universal health care.

It is also at this point that liberalism would become identified with un-American attitudes. The naïve embrace of Stalin by some on the left crashed headlong into McCarthyism. Unfortunately for Democrats, Eisenhower turned out to be a Republican, and liberals cemented a reputation for elitism by making the brilliant-but-remote Adlai Stevenson their man.

In 1960 a new hope was born. John F. Kennedy brought virility to liberalism. After his assassination, the mantle fell to the bulldog Johnson, who rapidly whipped up a cocktail of social welfare and civil rights reforms.

But in an attempt to show that he was not soft on reds, Johnson also brought on the Vietnam War. He did catastrophic damage to his party, to liberalism and to the United States.

Following Robert F. Kennedy's



assassination, Democrats put forward a series of disastrous presidential candidates, and even a disastrous president. The names Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis (and, still later, Al Gore and John Kerry), have become associated with elitism, woodenness, impotence, doe-eyed dovishness or some combination thereof. Only Bill Clinton

stood apart.

It is to the post-civil-rights period that Alterman and Mattson bring their sharpest criticisms, for it is during this period that liberalism traded in an emphasis on improving the lot of the working and middle classes for identity politics. It traded in muscular investments in society for a pitying, victim-oriented world view. And it lost many Americans in the process.

Liberals are still reaping that harvest. In a particularly devastating passage, the authors take New York's Gov. Andrew Cuomo to task: "In the same legislative session that legalized gay marriage Cuomo engineered a cap on annual increases in the amount of property taxes collected by local school districts.... [M]ost energetically, Cuomo fought to ensure the demise of New York State's millionaire tax at the moment when its proceeds might have been able to prevent the kinds of cuts being enforced. These were the priorities of a man who occupied the office once held not only by his father but also by Franklin D. Roosevelt before him."

Today, liberalism is "primarily a movement designed to increase social and cultural freedoms for those who [can] afford to enjoy them." The advantage of this brand of liberalism is that it does not ruffle the feathers of the rich financiers of political campaigns.

Not every page in *The Cause* will break the hearts of old-line liberals. The occasional policy triumph is recounted. We learn about the depth and breadth of intellectual contributions from luminaries like Reinhold Niebuhr, Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Rorty. And the volume is filled with punchy mini-biographies of the stars of liberal activism and politics.

Yet one is left with the distinct impression that the liberal policy edifice built under Roosevelt, Truman and Johnson may be nearing the end of a long siege. President Obama, the authors suggest, is another liberal

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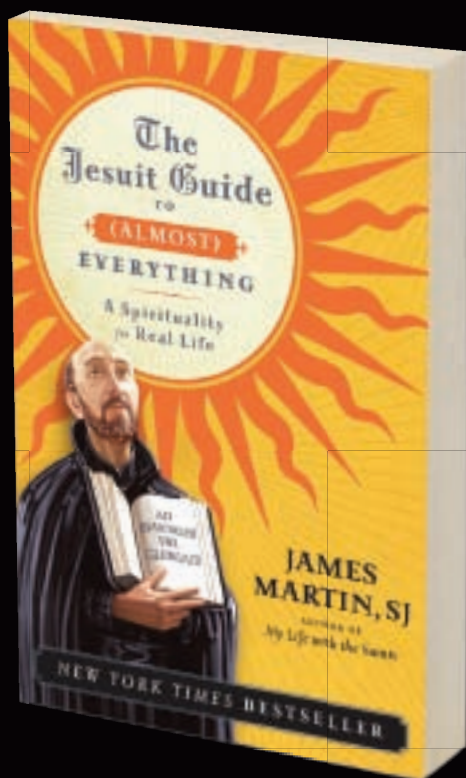
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showing up to a gunfight armed with a library book. He is carrying on the irksome liberal habit of overpromising and underperforming. So liberalism's best hope at the moment may lie not in its proponents' ability to make

a case, but in modern conservatism's own off-putting and self-defeating tendencies.

**PETER REICHARD** is a writer and public policy researcher who lives in New Orleans.

GEORGE V. COYNE

**THE OPEN SOURCE UNIVERSE**

**SCIENCE AND RELIGION  
IN QUEST OF TRUTH**

By John Polkinghorne  
Yale University Press. 143p \$26

In the search for truth and understanding in today's world there is arguably no more important interaction than that between the natural sciences and religious belief. From academe to journalism, from Beijing to Boston the interplay between these two prominent areas of modern culture rings out with a clarion call to either dialogue or warfare. There are very few, to my mind, who have spoken out with as nuanced and balanced an approach to this interaction as John Polkinghorne, a physicist, Anglican priest and firm proponent of the ultimate unity of all the best of our experiences as human beings.

In this book Polkinghorne has gathered together his thinking over several decades. He reflects once more on topics, presented especially in 15 of his books, which cover a vast range of areas in which he sees the most meaningful threads weaving together a multicolored fabric of religious faith and scientific knowledge. His approach is both serious and playful. When exploring, for instance, the classical

concept of the human soul in terms of modern ideas on information-bearing patterns he states: "We are playing with the toys of thought, but it is play with serious intention."

The overarching epistemology of this book, as of all his writings on these matters, is to pursue theology in the context of science. Thus the "bottom-up" approach—from empirical evidence to understanding—which is the hallmark of the sciences is also for Polkinghorne an essential, if not exclu-

sive, characteristic of theology. On the other hand, the scientific venture requires a faith—only analogous to religious faith—that there is a rational structure to the universe that science explores. Both science and religion are seeking truth through the attainment of well-motivated beliefs. In both searches the seeker after truth proceeds by reasonable, motivated faith and not

by certain insight.

Although Polkinghorne admits that the ultimate interpretation of quantum mechanical uncertainty cannot be resolved by physics alone, he offers convincing arguments that in the quantum world there is an intrinsic, ontological uncertainty and that even at the macroscopic level, this characterizes a world that has an open and not totally predetermined future.



This intrinsic openness of reality is further reinforced by the examination of so-called “chaotic” macroscopic systems, in which the initial conditions of certain dynamical systems are sufficiently undetermined that the future history of the system cannot be fully calculated. In brief, the universe as known from physics has an intrinsic, dynamic, open character to it, and thus it is creative. In brief, the universe as a totality is relational and evolutionary.

While in the tradition of Darwin many would reserve the notion of evolution to living systems, Polkinghorne presents cogent arguments for predicating evolution of the universe as a whole. From quantum to macroscopic processes, the universe continues to evolve and not simply to complete a predetermined design. While Darwinian natural selection can only be properly predicated of living systems, it is not, according to Polkinghorne, of the essence of evolution as such. Is it not proper to see evolution at work in the birth of galaxies and stars, where chance and necessity are at work? The science of cosmology has shown that small, random fluctuations in the primeval energy/matter of the universe provided the seeds from which gravity—a law of nature—brought about the birth of galaxies and stars. This came about not by pure chance nor by pure design but by a blending of random processes intertwined with the lawful structure of the universe. This is evolution on a grand scale.

This is but one of the many instances in which Polkinghorne now invites us to consider that the rational structure of the world as seen by science is “shot through with signs of mind, and religious belief suggests that it is indeed the mind of the Creator that lies behind the wonderful order of the universe.” Other similar invitations are offered by Polkinghorne’s discussion of quantum mechanics and quantum cosmology, information theory, the nature of time, consciousness and

personality, etc. But the author reminds us time and time again that “such hints of God will not arise from mistaken attempts to provide theological answers to scientific questions, for we have very good reason to believe that scientifically stateable questions will receive scientifically stateable answers without the need for assis-

tance from theology.” This book is an elegant and persuasive argument that accepting the hints can be a deeply rewarding human, perhaps even spiritual, experience.

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**GEORGE V. COYNE, S.J.**, former director of the Vatican Observatory, is the McDevitt Professor of Religious Philosophy at Le Moyne College, Syracuse, N.Y.

CLAUDIO M. BURGALETA

## AMERICA’S NEW FACE

### LATINO CATHOLICISM Transformation in America’s Largest Church

By Timothy Matovina  
Princeton University Press. 328p \$29.95

The “browning of America” or the increase of the population of Americans of non-European ancestry, especially from Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and the social metamorphoses that accompanies it, first came to the attention of the public at large in a Time magazine cover story on April 9, 1990. In the past decades Latinos or Hispanics have surpassed African-Americans to become the largest minority group in the United States. According to the

U.S. Census Bureau, the Latino population is just over 50 million, or 16.3 percent of the total population in March 2012. And some demographers, including those at the Pew Research Center, predict that the relative youthfulness of the Hispanic population in the United States and its comparatively high birth rate will probably ensure that by the year 2050 people of Hispanic ancestry will constitute close to 30 percent of the coun-

try’s population.

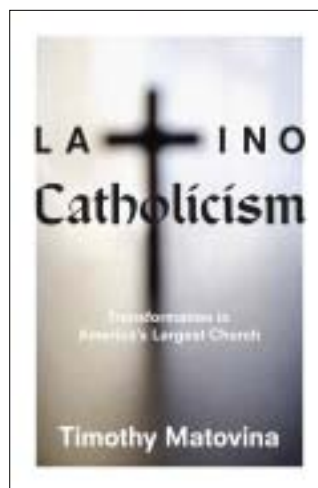
*Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America’s Largest Church*, by Timothy Matovina, a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame and director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, contributes to the many studies of the so-called “browning” of the United States by focusing on the impact that

Latinos are having on the United States’ largest religious denomination.

Though not Latino himself, Matovina has written extensively, sympathetically and insightfully on Mexican-American religious experience and history, especially in San Antonio, Tex., and in particular associated with the devotion to

Our Lady of Guadalupe. His latest endeavor casts the net wider and skillfully examines the role not only of Mexican-Americans but of other Latino groups in the United States, and how U.S. society, the Catholic Church and the various Latino peoples of the United States are interacting to reciprocally transform each other.

His methodology is interdisciplinary, and depending on the chapter,



Matovina brings the perspective of a historian, sociologist, political scientist and pastoral theologian or a combination of these. This use of various hermeneutics is an effective way to plumb the vibrant and multidimensional experience that is Latino Catholicism, made up of various generations and populated by people from more than 20 Latin American countries, some recently arrived, others who have lived here for decades and many who were born here.

About the only perspective on Latino religious experience that is missing is a more literary one that would present it through the lenses of contemporary writers who have chronicled it in their fiction and non-fiction works, for example Julia Alvarez, Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Oscar Hijuelos, Nicholasa Mohr, Pat Mora, Judith Ortíz Cofer, Richard Rodríguez, Esmeralda Santiago and Pirri Thomas, to name a few. Regardless, Matovina's eclectic

approach makes this volume unique among studies of Latino Catholics in the United States and goes beyond them in that others have been more historical or theological in nature. Examples include David Badillo's *Latinos and the New Immigrant Church* (2006) and *Hispanic Ministry in the 21st Century: Present and Future* (2010), edited by Hosffman Ospino.

Matovina's book begins with a chapter on Hispanics in U.S. Catholic history and in eight other chapters considers integration, pastoral ministry among Latinos, Hispanic parishes and apostolic movements, leadership in the Latino Catholic community, worship and spirituality, Latino Catholicism in the public square and faith formation practices and challenges in the Latino Catholic community.

Latino Catholicism is characterized by issues similar to those one finds in mainstream U.S. Catholicism—for example, declining religious practices and increasing religious illiteracy among Catholics across the board, but especially among younger generations. However, it is a qualitatively different way of living out the same creed that all U.S. Catholics embrace. Among the differences that Matovina describes very well are Hispanic ministry efforts that marry the preservation of Latino cultural traditions with pastoral ministry. He also includes church-sponsored community organizing efforts for the poor; advocacy and organizing around immigration reform; culturally appropriate and sensitivity training programs for seminarians and lay ecclesial ministers; lobbying for more Latino bishops; and non-parish-based spiritualities, often domestic, that are more Marian, charismatic and linked to apostolic movements like *Cursillo* than is the norm among most U.S. Catholics.

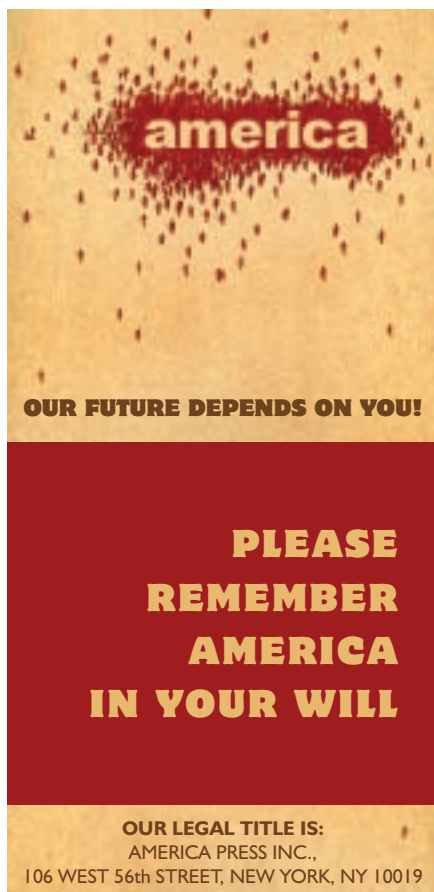
Perhaps the most often asked question about Latino Catholicism's future is how quickly will Latinos follow the

pattern of other Catholic immigrants to these shores and assimilate into the U.S. mainstream? How quickly will they adopt English as their primary language and embrace American customs and cease to be distinctively Latinos, other than by their surnames? The short answer to the question is that no one knows for sure. Matovina's treatment of the issue is characteristic of the irenic and insightful approach of this book. He notes that according to the 2010 U.S. Census, nearly 70 percent of Latinos are U.S. born. And a 2003 study of high school-age Latinos showed that 15 percent speak primarily Spanish, 60 percent are bilingual, and 25 percent speak English with little or no Spanish spoken. These figures augur for a future similar to that of other Catholic ethnic groups (especially Italian-Americans), in terms of assimilation to the English language and U.S. culture.

Yet Matovina offers a caution: "Collectively Latinos neither rapidly assimilate nor indefinitely retain Spanish language and their allegiance to Hispanic cultural ways... The ongoing accommodation to U.S. church and society among Latinos has transpired concurrently with the arrival of other Hispanic newcomers since at least the first decades of the twentieth century." Matovina convincingly argues that this pattern suggests a future for the Hispanic presence in U.S. Catholicism that comingles both assimilation and cultural retention, which "will persist much longer than it did for European immigrant groups." And this cautious but realistic prediction, it seems to me, could not be a better endorsement for a book that so clearly and thoroughly describes what will be the majority face of Catholicism in the United States for decades to come.

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**CLAUDIO M. BURGALETA, S.J.**, is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University, New York City.





## LETTERS

### Core Corruption

Thanks to Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., for “The Plagiarism Plague” (5/14), a timely article on an important matter. As a college teacher, I have encountered a fair bit of plagiarism and have always sought to expose it and address it with students to get them to take it seriously. Thankfully, I’ve always been backed up by department chairs and administrative officials.

Why is plagiarism such a problem? Social institutions, like living organisms, rot from the inside out. When the core goes bad, the corruption spreads to the rest of the social body. That’s why the sins of the priests and elders required a greater sacrifice for atonement than the sins of the ordinary people (Leviticus): official sin corrupts the faith community. The corrupted behavior of religious, political, educational, business and professional leaders is followed by increasing corrupted behavior of those participating in the institutions they head.

DARRIN W. SNYDER BELOUSEK  
*Lima, Ohio*

### Will Ethics Be on the Final?

There is something to be said for the “sudden-death” exam system that I went through back in the 1970s. We had no continuous assessment at all. We wrote essays and were awarded marks, but these were considered just feedback from the teacher. For the degree everything depended on the final exams at the end of the three years.

If you didn’t actually learn something and engage thoughtfully with it, and if you didn’t develop the ability to

organize it rapidly and write it down coherently, you failed. You would have to be a complete fool to imagine that you could get a degree in such a system by plagiarism. Could “sudden-death” make a comeback?

CHRIS CHATTERIS, S.J.  
*Cape Town, South Africa*

### Sign of Change

Re “Take a Deep Breath,” by Thomas Massaro, S.J. (5/14): When the Vatican II changes started, I thought some were trivial and even annoying. I thought the sign of peace was silly. Then one day, I had a day off from work and went to Mass with my daughter’s class. I sat well back in the church, with no one near me. As the time for the sign of peace approached, I suddenly realized I had no one to exchange it with. I immediately moved farther up the church near the other parents.

At that point I realized the silly sign of peace had become important to me. Now I go to a church in Toledo at St. Martin De Porres, where the sign of peace is enthusiastically shared among the congregation, including hugs from many of the members. The changes really did mean something.

BOB KLAHN  
*Toledo, Ohio*

### Education and Mourning

Re the assessment of Jesuit universities by John P. Schlegel, S.J. (Of Many Things, 5/14): I am a proud product of a Jesuit education and prouder still that my son followed his parents to Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. Yet I am in mourning for the church I knew and the faith that formed me. The scandals rocking the church have done more damage than

anyone cares to admit, but there are some steps that might improve the education and formation of priests in the United States and elsewhere.

One welcome step would be to close the undergraduate divisions of diocesan seminaries everywhere. Accept men for formation who are college graduates from places like Jesuit institutions and insist on training their minds in one other discipline beyond theology or counseling. We need priests who are products of the real world, not the perfumed parlors of funeral homes and rectories. I cherish my Jesuit education for many reasons, including the options it has offered. I sometimes think the current scandal arose from despairing men, brain-bored and poorly formed for the joys and rigors and terrors of life facing the rest of us. In Philadelphia, the laity is better educated than the clergy from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, and it shows.

VINCENT GAITLEY  
*Exton, Pa.*

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## **Eight-Hour Mirage**

Concerning "Requiem for the 8-Hour Day?" (Current Comment, 5/7): Only when a society is committed to good working conditions and wages sufficient to support family life can we begin to revive the eight-hour day with a wage structure based on it. Today, the vast amount of unpaid labor beyond the eight-hour window is staggering, leaving the actual hourly wage a mirage. And when it requires multiple wage earners with multiple jobs to amass what is needed to support a family, it is clear that something is very wrong.

One answer is to have wages reflect not just the labor market but the productivity returns that labor now rarely sees. It is these productivity gains that have produced the immense income gap that is rapidly diminishing the middle class and leaving the bottom underpaid, unemployed or underemployed. When productivity gains belong only to capital and management, society must use its taxing power

to provide human dignity and family security to those excluded from a civilized work force.

FRANCIS X. GINDHART  
*Bluffton, S.C.*

## **Making a Difference**

Re "Why They Left," by William J. Byron, S.J., and Charles Zech (4/30): I certainly can identify with many of the respondents. I was one of them for too many years. I rationalized all sorts of reasons to avoid my responsibility to be a Christian. Only later in my life did I soften my heart and finally see that if the church is going to change for the better, it had to start with me. As they say, if you're looking for a perfect church, as soon as you join it, it will no longer be perfect.

Look for the good. Do not dwell on the negatives. Be an active, productive participant. Don't expect others to meet your every need. There are plenty of saints to model your life after. Make a habit of investing time in spiritual read-

ing, divine adoration etc. It can and does made a difference.

STAN SCHARDON  
*New Braunfels, Tex.*

## **Where Are They Now?**

Re "Why They Left": I wish to see some information about the "brain drain" in the church. Having worked as a chaplain at our local state university, I realized that I would see only a tiny fraction of the "best" of our Catholic college graduates. They were and are faithful to the church. I've witnessed their marriages and baptized their children. But they were fewer than 10 percent of the total graduates in any of the classes I saw during the 1970s and 80s. They are now the young professionals who are making a major contribution to our economy and our society, but only a few contribute to the local parishes. Where are the young professionals now? What is the church doing to "feed" them and utilize their talents?

JOHN E. ANDERSON  
*Las Cruces, N.M.*

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# Lifegiving Bread

MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (B), JUNE 10, 2012

Readings: Ex 24:3-8; Ps 116:12-18; Heb 9:11-15; Mk 14:12-16

*For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant (Heb 9:15)*

I first met Mr. Smith while bringing Communion to bedridden residents of a local nursing home. Like some other residents, he had an advanced case of dementia. As I knocked on his door and half entered, I introduced myself, letting him know I was from the parish. He responded, “#&%\* off!” As I was backing out of the room, he asked, “Well, what did you want?” “I came to bring Communion,” I said. “Oh,” he replied, “that’s different. Come on in.” He became instantly devout. After we prayed the Lord’s Prayer together, I gave him Communion, which he took with great reverence. He then slowly blessed himself. It was beautiful. Then he said, “Now #&%\* off!”

This experience has been a continual inspiration for me. It was obvious to me that Mr. Smith was not just going through the motions of a past habit of piety. He was very much present and engaged in the holiness of taking Communion. I dare say he was more lucid than at any other time of the day. Even though Mr. Smith’s mind was deeply compromised by his brain disease, receiving Communion drew him to the holy presence of God and engaged his own spiritual dignity.

Today’s second reading from the Letter to the Hebrews is a complex layering of symbols that have everything to do with engaging the holiness of God. Having recalled the Old

Testament understanding of sanctuary ritual, the author aligns that priestly activity to Christ, the high priest of the new, perfected covenant. The short version of the reading begins, “When Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the more perfect tabernacle...he entered once for all into the sanctuary.” Later, he will identify this sanctuary as heaven itself.

Here we are not asked to imagine that heaven is a spiritualized temple. Rather, we are invited to consider the universe as a temple, with heaven representing the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant once resided. The physical temple’s Holy of Holies was so sacred that the high priest entered it only on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). He had a rope tied to him, just in case he encountered God directly and died. In that case the other priests could drag him out without having to enter themselves. Hebrews assures us that this sacred space was merely a physical copy of the real sanctuary in heaven, where one is guaranteed a direct encounter with God. By his sacrifice Christ penetrated this heavenly sanctuary. “For this reason he is the mediator of the new covenant.”

In my mind, the created universe exists on two levels: a physical and a

spiritual. These levels penetrate each other utterly. This way of framing things helps me understand why miracles need not violate nature, since they are governed by the spiritual aspect of nature, which cannot be explained by physical laws. Imagining the universe as a temple and heaven as the Holy of Holies is spiritually rich. It helps me see how holy the universe really is. Would that in every decision we make about the created world, we could be cognizant of its holy wondrousness. I would treat people differently if I recognized that we all live under the same sacred canopy.

Most of all, this image helps me to understand how Christ has united heaven and earth. Heaven is not



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Consider Mass as entering the Holy of Holies.
- How is the Eucharist reflected in your life?

earth and earth is assuredly no heaven, but in Christ they are now intrinsically related; they are part of the same temple. In Christ there is nothing profane that is not also holy, nothing temporal that is not also eternal.

I think Mr. Smith intuitively knew this. From the depths of the human condition, the eternal announced itself. And in taking Communion he entered the Holy of Holies with Christ. He took viaticum the day before he died. So with angels to carry him into paradise, he also had with him the Bread of Life, food for the journey—a journey that carries its glorious fulfillment with it.

PETER FELDMEIER is the Murray/Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo.

ART: TAD DUNNE



# Our Providential God

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JUNE 17, 2012

Readings: Ez 17:22-24; Ps 92:2-16; 2 Cor 5:6-10; Mk 4:26-34

*We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)*

Many people believe that everything happens for a reason. I think this sentiment is related to a fundamental trust that God is in control and that human lives are neither random nor meaningless. Sometimes we draw on this belief as we try to make sense of a tragedy. I certainly hope that none of us views his or her life as utterly ungrounded or untethered from God's care. But actually believing that God is pulling every string or that everything that happens is ultimately good is fraught with enormous difficulties. What about human freedom? Does not sin mean that I have chosen against God's will, that I have opted for chaos and not divine order? Such a dictum can also lead us to seek reasons for incidents that have no reason, especially tragedies or horrifying moral evil.

Having said this, we can still take divine providence seriously. That is, we ought to believe that God is in fact guiding our lives, the church and indeed the world toward his purposes. Consider it "big picture" providence. But big-picture providence does not mean that God is not intimately part of our lives here and now. The twofold confidence that God is with us here as well as broadly drawing all things to his ends are what today's Scriptures witness to.

Paul tells the Corinthians in today's reading, "We walk by faith, not by sight." This faith is not ungrounded in our experience; it is consonant with a living knowledge of God in our lives.

Earlier in 2 Corinthians Paul writes, "All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (3:18). Experiencing a foretaste of God's glory not only supports our faith but shows us a glimpse of the glory to which God is guiding us.

Paul ends today's passage with the exhortation to "aspire to please him," reminding us of the sobering fact that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." I see here the insight that in order for us to live wholeheartedly in harmony with God's providential care, we ought to strive to follow God's will. It reminds me of something the late renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell often taught: When you are following your bliss, then invisible hands will guide you along the right path. By "bliss" he was not referring to some emotional or spiritual high. Rather, he was talking about realizing one's deepest truth, which is the same as God's truth implanted in us.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus offers two comparisons about planting and fruition. In the first, he compares our experience of the kingdom of God to the experience of a farmer who scatters seeds and later, without understanding how it happened, finds the seeds grown to produce a harvest. In the second, he compares the kingdom to a mustard seed, which is among the smallest seeds but produces an unusually large bush.

I do not know how God's grace

works. Sometimes I craft what I consider a perfect lecture and get a "hohum" response from my students. At other times, a side comment of mine produces a revelation for a student, who will write me years later and thank me for "that insight that changed my life." This does not mean, of course, that I have a license to be slack in my preparation, as if that didn't matter. But it does mean that I am not in control of the kingdom. None of us are. We should always "aspire to please him," and this means

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Ask God to reveal your bliss.
- Are you putting impediments in your path?
- Where have God's invisible hands helped?

being intentional and responsible. Beyond that, we scatter seeds and can only be surprised by how things come to fruition.

We can also nurture hope that small beginnings can have amazing outcomes. Jesus' ministry must have looked like a disaster to an outsider. He converted very few who heard him, and even his disciples remained relatively clueless throughout his ministry. But, of course, his ministry brought about the salvation of the world. The kingdom is God's providence in action.

PETER FELDMEIERS

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# The College of Saint Elizabeth Center for Ministry and Spirituality Presents



## Summer Institute 2012

July 9-20, 2012

(Course Highlights – with more to come!)

Enriching souls,  
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### New Certificate Program in Spirituality and Aging!

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### New Hispanic Leadership Institute Certificate Program! *For credit*

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(for both Spanish  
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**Thomas Zanzig** - (July 9-12 morning/evening choices)  
Speaker, Author, Consultant in Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality  
*Spiritual Transformation: The Heart of Adult Faith Formation*  
(1 credit or audit)



**Rev. Richard Fragomeni** - (July 9-12 morning/evening choices)  
Associate Professor of Liturgy and Preaching,  
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois  
*Spirituality Through the Ages: Ancient Mystics and Modern Sages* (1 credit or audit)



**Rev. Dr. Kathleen J. Rusnak, Ph.D.** - (July 16-19, morning/evening choices)  
Ordained Lutheran Pastor and Author, President & Founder of The Brick Wall2, Inc.  
*Living an Authentic Spiritual Life: Lessons from the End of Life that Inform, Change,  
and Give Us Hope* (1 credit or audit)



**Rev. Luigi Zanotto, M.C.C.J.** - (July 16-19, morning/evening choices)  
Pastor of St. Lucy's Parish in Newark, Author and International Consultant  
on Catechetics, Secretary of the Mexican Bishops' Biblical Commission  
*Catolico! Conoce la Biblia! Ven y Aprende a Interpretarla*  
(*Catholic! Know the Bible! Come and Learn to Interpret It*)

## Retreats

### Twilight Retreat

Tuesday, July 10, 3 pm to 8 pm (includes light supper)

*The Gift & Challenge of Aging*

**Brother Romeo Bonsaint, S.C., Ph.D., and Brother John Hamilton, C.F.X.**

Co-Directors of Resources in Spiritual Formation, Danvers, Massachusetts



### Morning or Evening Retreat

Wednesday, July 11, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm or 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm

*"Where Belief Meets Science - The Power of the Brain to Connect to Your Spirituality and Enrich Your Life"*

**Dr. Charlotte Tomaino** - Neuropsychologist and Author of *Awakening The Brain –  
The Neuropsychology of Grace*



### Retreat

Saturday, July 14, 9 am to 2 pm (includes lunch)

*Forgiveness and Unfinished Business...Healing and Growth for the Journey of Life!*

**Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T.**

Missionary Servant of the Most Holy Trinity and Senior Editor of *Human Development* magazine

### Saturday Retreat for the Hispanic Community

Saturday, July 14, 9 am to 3 pm

*The History of the People of Israel as a Starting Point in Reading and Interpreting Scripture*  
(Tema: La historia del Pueblo de Israel como punto de partida para leer e interpretar la Biblia)

**Rev. Luigi Zanotto, M.C.C.J.**

College of Saint Elizabeth  
Center for Ministry and Spirituality  
2 Convent Road, Morristown, N.J. 07960-6989

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